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# THE FOLK LORE

AND

# PROVINCIAL NAMES

OF

# BRITISH BIRDS

BY THE
REV. CHARLES SWAINSON, M.A.,
RECTOR OF OLD CHARLTON;
*Author of "A Handbook of Weather Folk Lore."*

LONDON:
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# PREFACE.

IN submitting this work to the members of the Folk Lore Society, and to the public, my object has been to gather from various quarters the provincial names of our wild British birds (all notices of domesticated species, being omitted), as well as the popular sayings and superstitions attached to them, illustrating these, if possible, by references to similar beliefs prevalent among other nations.

I have endeavoured to model it, however imperfectly, on the invaluable volumes of M. Rolland, "La Faune Populaire de la France," following the classification, and adopting the nomenclature, used in the "List of British Birds compiled by a Committee of the British Ornithologists' Union. London, 1883."

I must express my most sincere thanks to Mr. J. A. Harvie Brown for the help he so kindly afforded in allowing me to make use of his MS. list of the provincial names of Scotch birds, also for many useful suggestions and corrections; and to Mr. Gomme for the courtesy and consideration he has shown in many ways, especially in his revision of the proofs.

I may add that the completion of the work has been unavoidably delayed from several causes, one of which has been my own ill-health.

CHARLES SWAINSON.

THE RECTORY,
OLD CHARLTON.

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# THE FOLK LORE

AND

# PROVINCIAL NAMES OF BRITISH BIRDS.

---

*Order* PASSERES.
*Sub-Order* OSCINES.
*Section* OSCINES DENTIROSTRES.
*Family* TURDIDÆ.
*Sub-family* TURDINÆ.
*Genus* TURDUS.

## MISSEL THRUSH (*Turdus viscivorus*).

**Thrush**: A.-S. *Thrysce;* akin to O. H. G. *Drosca*, hence Ger. *Drossel.*

1. From the fondness of this bird for the berries of the mistletoe, holly, and holm, it is called

Missel thrush (general).
Muzzel thrush (Roxburgh).

Cf. *Grive du gui* (France); *Misteldrossel* (Germany); *Viscado* (Italian Switzerland).

Holm thrush, Holm cock, Holm screech (Cornwall, Devon, Dorset).
Mizzly Dick (Northumberland).

2. The harsh note it utters when alarmed has caused it to receive the names of

Screech (general).
Skirlcock (Derbyshire).
Skrike or Skrite (South generally).
Squawking thrush (Isle of Wight).
Jercock, or Chercock (Westmoreland).

Horse thrush (Northants).
Gawthrush (ditto).
Jay (North of Ireland).
Jay pie (Wilts).

3. In Scotland and Ireland the names of the missel thrush and fieldfare (*Turdus pilaris*) are often interchangeable, hence we find the former known by the titles of

Big felt (Ireland).
Feltie, or Feltiflyer (Berwick ; Stirling).

The same confusion prevails in East Anglia, where we meet with the names

Fulfer (Norfolk).
Felfit (East Suffolk).

4. The Missel thrush is also called

Stormcock (general)

From its habit of singing through gales of wind and storms of rain.

Throstle cock (Roxburgh).
Thrice (*i.e.* Thrush) cock (Midlands; Salop).
Big mavis (East Lothian).
Cf. *Grosse grive* (France).
Bull thrush (Hants)

The last two names given from its large size.

Wood thrush (Dumfries).
Norman thrush (Craven).
Stone thrush (Dorset).
Marble thrush (Northants).

The last two from the round marble-like spots on its breast. Cf. French term *Grievère—i.e.* speckled, spotted like a thrush (*grive*).

Sycock (Derbyshire).
Bunting thrush.
Fen thrush (Northants).
Butcher bird (Donegal).
Crakle.
Corney Keevor (Antrim).
Hillan (? Highland) piet (Aberdeen).

The Welsh call it, according to Pennant, *Pen y llwyn, i.e.* Master or Head of the coppice, for it will not suffer any bird to approach its haunts during the season of incubation.

5. Bewick mentions a superstition that mistletoe was only propagated by the seed which passed the digestive organs of this bird ; hence the proverb, "Turdus malum sibi cacat."

In some parts of France (*vid.* Rolland, p. 241), the missel thrush is believed to be able to speak seven languages.

## SONG THRUSH (*Turdus musicus*).

1. From A.-S. *Thrysce* (see preceding) are derived :—

Thrush.
Thrusher (Berks and Bucks).
Dirsh (Somerset).
Thrushfield (Salop).

2. From A.-S. *Throstle.*

Throstle (North ; Midlands ; Ireland).
Thrushel or Thrustle (Salop).
Thirstle (Devon ; Cornwall ; Salop).

3. Various names.

Grey bird (Sussex ; Devon ; Cornwall).
Whistling thrush or Whistling Dick (Thames Valley).
Mavis (East Anglia ; Ireland ; Scotland).

Cf. *Mauvis* (France) ; *Malvis* (Spain).

This term seems to be applied by old writers to the Missel thrush and Throstle alike. Thus we find in Spenser :—

"The thrush replyes : the mavis descant playes"
(*Epithalam.*, l. 81),

where the latter bird is evidently the throstle ; the word "descant" (*i.e.* the altering the movement of an air by additional notes and ornaments) being an exact description of this bird's song. But, on the other hand, Skelton, in his poem "Philip Sparrow," writes :—

"The threstill with her warblynge,
The mavis with her whistell."

Here the throstle's sweet music is contrasted with the clear shrill cry of the missel thrush.

4. Attempts have been made—with what success I leave the reader to judge—to put the thrush's song into words. One is by Macgillivray, quoted by Harting ("Ornithology of Shakespeare," p. 138) :—

"Dear, dear, dear
Is the rocky glen ;
Far away, far away, far away
The haunts of men.
Here shall we dwell in love
With the lark and the dove
Cuckoo and corn rail,
Feast on the banded snail

Worm and gilded fly:
Drink of the crystal rill
Winding adown the hill,
Never to dry.
With glee, with glee, with glee,
Cheer up, cheer up, cheer up, here.
Nothing to harm us, then sing merrily,
Sing to the loved ones whose nest is near.
Qui, qui, qui, kweeu, quip,
Tiurru, tiurru, chipiwi.
Too-tee, too-tee, chiu choo,
Chirri, chirri, chooee,
Quiu, qui, qui."

Mr. Harting remarks that "the first four lines, lines 7, 13 and 14, and the last five lines in particular, approach remarkably close in sound to the original; and this is rendered the more apparent if we endeavour to pronounce the words by whistling."

Another, from *Land and Water*, Sept. 18th, 1875, given by Mr. Frank Buckland, is of a different character:—

"Knee deep, knee deep, knee deep,
Cherry du, cherry du, cherry du, cherry:
White hat, white hat;
Pretty Joey, pretty Joey, pretty Joey."

A third is from Chambers' "Popular Rhymes of Scotland," pp. 197, 198. "In the stewartry of Kirkcudbright, it is told that a certain drouthy carle, called Gilbert Doak, was one fine spring morning going home not quite sober, when to his amazement he heard a mavis saluting him with—

"Gibbie Doak, Gibbie Doak, where hast tu been, where hast tu been?
I hae been at the kirk, priein, priein, priein!"

"At the kirk priein" is a very different thing in Scotland from "at the kirk praying" (to *prie* meaning to taste). Gilbert had been sacrificing to Bacchus with some drouthy neighbours at the clachan, or village where the parish church is situated.

5. Folk lore.

It is stated in "Science Gossip," iii. 141, that it is a common superstition that thrushes acquire new legs and cast the old ones, when about ten years old. According to Jonston ("Wonderful Things of Nature," p. 192), they are deaf.

## REDWING (*Turdus iliacus*).

1. So called from the reddish-orange colour of the body under the wings and under wing coverts; whence also

Redwing thrush.
Red thrush (Midlands).

Cf. *Turdu russu* (Sicily), *Rothdrossel* (Germany).

Redwing mavis (Forfar).

2. The following seem to be akin to the German *Weindrossel*:—

(Cf. the Alsatian title, *Grive de vendange.*)

Wind thrush (Somerset).
Swine pipe.
Winnard (Cornwall).
Windle (Devon).

3. Various names.

Felt (Northants). See "Fieldfare" (*Turdus pilaris*).
Little feltyfare (East Lothian).
Pop.

4. Flight of the redwing.

"A rushing, rustling sound is heard in the English Channel on the dark still nights of winter, and is called the 'herring spear,' or 'herring piece,' by the fishermen of Dover and Folkestone. This is caused by the flight of those pretty little birds the redwings, as they cross the Channel on their way to warmer regions. The fishermen listen to the sound with awe, yet regard it, on the whole, as an omen of good success with their nets."—Henderson's "Folk-lore of the Northern Counties," pp. 99-100; quoting Dr. Buckland's "Curiosities of Natural History," Ser. II., 285-6. (See Curlew.)

## FIELDFARE (*Turdus pilaris*).

A.-S. *Feldefare—i.e.* field traveller.

1. Other forms.

Feltyfare or Feldefare (Midlands; Ireland).
Fildifire (Salop).
Feltiflier (Scotland).
Felfer (Craven; Lancashire).
Felfaw (North Riding).
Velverd (Wilts).
Felfit.
Felt or Cock felt (Northants).

2. From the predominant bluish tinge of its upper plumage are derived:—

Blue tail (Midlands; West Riding).
Blue bird (Devon; West Cornwall).
Blue back (Lancashire; Salop).
Blue, or Big, felt (Ireland).
Pigeon felt (Berks; Bucks; Oxon).
Grey thrush (Scotland).

3. Called from its harsh cry before rain :—
Storm bird (Norfolk).
Storm cock (Salop ; Scotland).
Screech bird ; Screech thrush (Stirling).
Shred cock (Salop).

4. Various names :—
Snow bird (Salop).
Because it assembles in large flocks before a heavy fall of snow.

Jack bird.
From its cry. Cf. *Chack chack* (Luxemburg), *Claque* (Normandy).

Monthly bird.—? Mountain bird (Forfar).
Hill bird (Scotland).
Cf. *Tourdon montagné* (Nice).
Redshank.

"It has been supposed," says Jamieson (under Feltifare), "that from the name Redshank, S. Redeschanke, probably originated the nursery story of the fieldfare burning its feet, when it wished to domesticate with men, like the Robin Redbreast."—See Gloss. to "Complaynt of Scotland," p. 365.

## BLACKBIRD (*Turdus merula*).

1. From its colour it also receives the names of—
Black uzzle, *i.e.* ousel (Craven).

"Alas, a black ouzel, Cousin Shallow,"
2 *King Henry IV.*, Act iii., Sc. 2.

where the expression seems to be equivalent to "a black sheep."

Blackie (North Riding ; Scotland).

2. Also called
Ousel, or Ousel cock.

"The ousel cock, so black of hue,
With orange tawny bill."
*Midsummer's Night's Dream*, iii. 1.

Garden ousel.
Ousel = A.-S. *Osle*, akin to.
Amsel (*i.q.* German term *Amsel*).
Woofell.
By this title (*i.q.* ousel) Drayton alludes to the blackbird in his "Polyolbion"—

"The woofell near at hand that hath a golden bill."

Merle (Ireland, Scotland).
From Lat. *merula*. So *Merle* (France), *Merlo* (Italy), *Mirlo* (Spain), *Merel* (Holland), *Amarl* (Austria).

### 3. Folk lore.

"When the blackbird sings before Christmas, she will cry before Candlemas." (Meath.)

It is also believed in Ireland that, when the blackbird sings loud and shrill, rain is sure to follow.

In the neighbourhood of Brescia the last two days of January and the first of February are called "I giorni della merla," the blackbird's days: and the story is that this bird, whose original colour was white, became black because one year these three days were so cold that she had to take refuge in a chimney.

Another reason for the colour of the blackbird is given in a French folk tale from the Ain (Rolland, p. 250), which runs as follows:—

"One day, while lurking in a thicket, the blackbird, who was in those times as white as snow, saw to his great astonishment the magpie very busy hiding in the hole of a tree diamonds, jewels, and pieces of golden coin. He showed himself to her, and inquired the means by which he too might acquire a similar treasure. The magpie, not daring to withhold the information from a bird who had discovered her secret, replied, 'You must seek out in the bowels of the earth the palace of the Prince of Riches, offer him your services, and he will allow you to carry off as much treasure as your beak will hold. You will have to pass through many caverns, each one more abounding in riches than the last; but you must most particularly remember not to touch a single thing until you have actually seen the Prince himself.'

"The blackbird, on hearing this, repaired to the spot indicated by the magpie, where he found the entrance to a subterranean passage, into which he ventured. In time he reached a cavern, the walls of which were bright with silver; but mindful of the magpie's advice, he continued to pursue his way till he entered a second cavern, all ablaze with gold. This proved too much for him, and he plunged his beak greedily into the glittering dust with which the floor was strewed. Immediately there appeared a terrible demon, vomiting fire and smoke, who rushed upon the wretched bird with such lightning speed, that he escaped with the greatest difficulty. But, alas! the thick smoke had besmirched for ever his white feathers, and he became, as he is now, quite black, with the exception of his beak, which still preserves the colour of the gold he was so anxious to carry off. So it is that when the blackbird is surprised, he utters piercing cries of terror, as if he expected to be attacked by another monster."

In some parts of Germany, according to Montanus ("Die Deutschen Volksfeste," p. 177), the blackbird is called *Gottling* or "little god," and is supposed to be a protection against lightning if kept caged in a house.

There is a curious article of belief in the Sunnah, "that the souls of those in purgatory were in the crops of blackbirds, exposed to hell fire morning and evening until the Judgment Day."

S. Kevin and the Blackbird.—It is related of S. Kevin that once, whilst praying in the Temple of the Rock at Glendalough, with one hand outstretched, a blackbird descended and dropped her eggs in the palm. The compassionate saint never removed his hand until the eggs were hatched!

The blackbird, as a Jacobite symbol, occurs in an old Scotch song, the first two verses of which are as follows:—

"Upon a fair morning for soft recreation
I heard a fair lady was making her moan,
With sighing and sobbing and sad lamentation,
Saying, 'My blackbird most royal is flown.
My thoughts they deceive me,
Reflections do grieve me,

And I am o'erburdened with sad misery.
Yet if death should blind me,
As true love inclines me,
My blackbird I'll seek out wherever he be.

'Once in fair England my blackbird did flourish,
He was the chief blackbird that in it did spring,
Prime ladies of honour his person did nourish,
Because he was the true son of a king.
But since that false fortune
Which still is uncertain,
Has caused this parting between him and me,
His name I'll advance
In Spain and in France,
And I'll seek out my blackbird wherever he be."

Probably the allusion is to Charles II., called "black boy" when young, from his swarthy complexion. (See Ellis, "Orig. Letters," 3rd Ser., iii. 307.)

## RING OUZEL (*Turdus torquatus*).

1. So called from the white gorget on the bird's breast, which resembles a necklace, hence the French *Blanc collet*, and the names—

Ring blackbird.
Ring thrush.

2. Names given to it from the nature of its favourite haunts.

Moor, or mountain blackbird (North Riding; Scotland).
Heath throstle.
Tor ouzel (Devon).
Rock, or crag ouzel (Craven).
Rock blackbird (Stirling).
Hill chack (Orkney Isles).
Rock starling (Roxburgh).
Mountain ouzel.
Mountain thrush (Kirkcudbright).
Mountain colley (Somerset).

Cf. *Blanc collet* (see above).

3. Also called

Blackbird (Salop).
Michaelmas blackbird (Dorset).

Because it appears at Portland in large flocks in its autumnal and spring flights.

Round-berry bird (Connemara).

From its fondness for the berries of the rowan or mountain ash.

Ditch blackie (East Lothian).
Cowboy (Tipperary).

Whistler (Wicklow).

These two names from the loud clear whistle the bird utters after singing.

Flitterchack (Orkney Isles).

"So called from a belief that if the bird is seen near a house it betokens the speedy death of one of the occupants, or else that the family will soon 'flit' to some other locality."—J. W. H. Trail.

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*Genus* SAXICOLA.

## WHEATEAR (*Saxicola œnanthe*).

1. So called from the pure white colour of the base and lower portion of the side of the tail; whence also the names—

White tail.

Cf. *Cul blanc* (France).

White rump (Norfolk).
Wittol—*i.e.* White tail (Cornwall).
Whiteass (Cornwall).

2. From its short, quickly repeated cry, resembling a slight blow, it is called

Chock, or Chuck (Norfolk).
Chack, or Chacks (Orkney Isles).
Check bird.
Chickell (Devon).
Chat (Northants).
Snorter (Dorset).
Horse smatch, or Horse musher (Hants).

3. From the similarity between this note and the striking together of two pebbles it receives the names of

Clocharet (Forfar).

From Gaelic *Cloich*, a stone.

Steinkle (Shetland Isles).
Stanechacker (Lancashire; Aberdeen; North of Ireland).
Stonechat (Northants; Westmoreland; West Riding).

In the county Kerry it is called, for the same reason, *Custeen fay-clough*—*i.e.* the cunning little old man under the stone—spelt, probably, *Coistin faoi cloich*.

4. From its habit of following the plough and hopping from clod to clod in search of grubs, etc., when turned up; also from its frequenting upland fallows, it is called

Fallow-finch; Fallow-smich; or Fallow-lunch.

Clodhopper (Northants).
Fallow chat.
Cf. *Traine charrue; Garde charrue* (France)

5. Various names.
Cooper (South Pembroke).
Dyke hopper (Stirling).
Jobbler (Dorset).
Coney chuck (Norfolk).
From its frequenting rabbit warrens.

6. The wheatear was and is still much prized as a dainty. Fuller writes of it ("Worthies of England," vol. ii., p. 382) as "being no bigger than a lark, which it equalleth in the fineness of the flesh (but) far exceedeth in the fatness thereof. The worst is, that being only seasonable in the heat of summer, and then naturally larded with lumps of fat, it is soon subject to corrupt. That palate-man shall pass in silence, who being seriously demanded his judgment concerning the abilities of a great lord, concluded him a man of very weak parts, 'because once he saw him, at a feast, feed on chickens when there were wheatears on the table.'"

John Taylor, the "Water Poet," also held the wheatear in high estimation, but is not quite correct in his derivation of its name :—

"There were rare birds I never saw before,
The like of them I think to see no more :
Th'are called wheat-ears, less than lark or sparrow,
Well roasted, in the mouth they taste like marrow.
When once 'tis in the teeth it is involv'd,
Bones, flesh, and all, is lusciously dissolv'd.
The name of wheat-ears, on them is ycleped
Because they come when wheat is yearly reaped,
Six weeks, or thereabouts, they are catch'd there,
And are wellnigh 11 months, God knows where."
("Works," ed. Hindley, 1872.)

7. Folk lore.

The wheatear bears a bad reputation in the North of England and Scotland. Its presence is considered, in some localities, to foretell the death of the spectator: in others the evil fortune is only considered likely to ensue if the bird be first seen on a stone. Should its appearance be first observed while sitting on turf or grass, good luck may be expected.

Like the Stonechat and the Yellow ammer, it is persecuted (especially in Orkney) because toads are believed to sit on its eggs and to hatch the young birds. Mr. J. H. Trail suggests that this idea has probably originated in the fact of toads being sometimes found under the same stones as the nests.

Mr. Mudie gives as a reason for its unpopularity its habit of frequenting old ruins, burial grounds, or cairns. "Its haunts," he says, "have gotten it a bad name. Its common clear note is not unlike the sound made in breaking stones with a hammer" (hence a Tipperary term for the bird, *Casúr Cloch* = Stone hammer), "and as it utters that note from the top of the heap which haply covers the bones of one who perished by the storm or by his own

hand; or from the mound beneath which there lie the slain of a battle-field, magnified through the mist of years; or from the rude wall that fences in many generations, it is no very unnatural stretch to the pondering fancy, which dwells in these parts, to associate the Wheatear with all the superstitions that unphilosophically, but not irreverently, belong to the place of graves."

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*Genus* PRATINCOLA.

## WHINCHAT (*Pratincola rubetra*).

1. So called from frequenting gorse bushes; whence also the appellations—

Gorse hopper (Cheshire).
Whin, or Fern lintie (Aberdeen).

2. The following names refer to its constant cry; most of them, at the same time, referring to its favourite haunt:—

Whinchat (see above).
Whinchacker (Craven).
Whincheck (Lancashire).
Whin clocharet (Forfar).

(For "clocharet" see under Wheatear, 3.)

Furze chat (Worcestershire).
Furr chuck (Norfolk).

Corruption of preceding.

Gorse hatch.
Furze hacker (Hants).
Gorse chat (Westmoreland).
Bush chat (West Riding).
Grass chat (Do.).
Utick, or Tick (Notts; Salop).

From its note, which sounds like "u-teek, u-teek."

Uthage (Salop) *i.q.* preceding.
Horse smatch.

## STONECHAT (*Pratincola rubicola*).

1. So called from the similarity between its alarm note and the striking together of two pebbles (see under Wheatear, 3), whence also

Stanechacker (Craven; Scotland).
Stone clink; Chickstone.
Stone clocharet (Forfar).

2. From the impatient movement of the tail, which it is in the habit of continually jerking, as if endeavouring to strike the stones on which it perches, it has received the names of

Stone smich, or stone smith.
Stane chapper.

Cf. *Martelot* (*i.e. Petit marteau*); *Maréchal* (France).

3. Various names :—

Moor titling.
Blacky top, or Blacky cap (Ireland).
Furze hacker (Hants).
Furze chitter (Cornwall).

"This," says Jamieson (under "Clocharet") "is one of the birds in whose natural history, as related by the vulgar, we perceive the traces of ancient superstition. It is believed in the North of Scotland that the toad covers the eggs of this bird during its absence from the nest." In other districts the stone chat is supposed to contain a drop of the devil's blood, and to have its young hatched by the toad. (See under Wheatear, p. 9, Yellow ammer, p. 70, Magpie, p. 77.)

The nest of this bird is never taken in Galloway because of the curse or malediction it is always pronouncing, which runs thus :—

"Stane chack !
Deevil tak' !
They who harry my nest
Will never rest,
Will meet the pest !
De'il break their lang back
Wha my eggs wad tak', tak' !"

(Chambers.)

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*Genus* RUTICILLA.

## REDSTART (*Ruticilla phœnicurus*).

1. So called from the bright rust red of its tail ("Start" from A.-S. *steort*, a tail) whence also

Red tail (Norfolk ; Oxfordshire ; Craven ; Scotland).
Jenny redtail (North Riding).
Fanny redtail.
Brantail (Yorkshire).
*i.e.* Brand tail, *i.q.* Fire tail.
Bessy brantail (Salop).
Katie brantail ,,
Fiery brantail ,,

Fire tail (Craven; Hants; Norfolk; Notts; Somerset; Warwick; Scotland).
Fire flirt.

From the continual motion of its tail, which it constantly jerks up and down.

In Wales the redstart is called *Rhonellgoç*, *i.e.* red tailed; in Normandy, *Cul rouge;* in Malta, *Qudiross.*

2. The male is called "whitecap" in Shropshire, from its white forehead.

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*Genus* ERITHACUS.

**REDBREAST** (*Erithacus rubecula*).

1. A name derived from the red forehead and breast; whence also

Ruddock (North): A.-S. *rudduc.*
Reddock (Dorset).
Broindergh—*i.e.*, Red belly (Gaelic).
Yr hobel goç—*i.e.*, The red bird (Wales).

Cf. *Rouge gorge, Rousse,* (France); *Rothkelchen* (Germany); *Barbarossa, Petti rosso* (Italy).

2. Familiar names.
Robin.
Robin Ruck—*i.e.* Ruddock (North).
Bob Robin (Stirling).

"About Bornholm, in Sweden," says Bewick, "it is called Tomi-Liden; in Norway, Peter Ronsmad; in Germany, Thomas Gierdet." To these Wordsworth thus alludes:—

"Art thou the bird whom man loves best,
The pious bird with the scarlet breast,
Our little English Robin?
The bird that comes about our doors
When autumn winds are sobbing?

"Art thou the Peter of Norway boors?
Their Thomas in Finland,
And Russia far inland;
The bird who, by some name or other,
All men who know thee call thee brother?"

The explanation given by the Chippeway Indians of this friendliness to man is as follows. "There was once a hunter so ambitious that his only son should signalise himself by endurance, when he came to the time of life to undergo the fast for the purpose of choosing his guardian spirit, that after the lad had fasted for eight days, his father still pressed him to

persevere. But next day, when the father entered the hut, his son had paid the penalty of violated nature, and in the form of a robin had just flown down to the top of a lodge. There, before he flew away to the woods, he entreated his father not to mourn the transformation. 'I shall be happier,' he said, 'in my present state than I could have been as a man. I shall always be the friend of men and keep near their dwellings; I could not gratify your pride as a warrior, but I will cheer you with my songs. . . . I am now free from cares and pains, my food is furnished by the fields and mountains, and my path is in the bright air.'"

(Jones, "Credulities Past and Present," 378.)

### 3. Weather lore.

In the south-east of Ireland it is believed that if a robin enters a house it is a prognostic of snow or frost,—a somewhat different opinion from that expressed in the Suffolk rhyme given by Mr. Forby in his "East Anglian Vocabulary": —

> "If the robin sings in the bush,
> Then the weather will be coarse;
> But if the robin sings on the barn,
> Then the weather will be warm."

### 4. Folk lore.

The respect with which the robin is regarded throughout Europe is probably due to its colour. The red breast, like the red head of the woodpecker and the chestnut throat of the swallow, classes it among the fire-bringing birds, all sacred to Donar, one of whose titles was Rothbart, the red-bearded—in allusion to the fiery lightning flash. Hence arises the belief in Scotland, Yorkshire, and Germany, that if a robin is killed, one of the cows belonging to the family of the slayer, or to the slayer himself, will give "bloody milk." A correspondent of *Notes and Queries*, Ser. IV., vol. i., p. 193, gives a curious instance of this, occurring near Boroughbridge.—"A young woman, who had been living in service at a farmhouse, one day told her relatives how the cow belonging to her late master had given 'bloody milk' after one of the family had killed a robin. A male cousin of hers, disbelieving the tale, went out and shot a robin purposely. Next morning her uncle's best cow, a healthy one of thirteen years, that had borne nine calves without mishap, gave half a canful of this 'bloody milk,' and did so for three days in succession, morning and evening. The liquid was of a pink colour, which, after standing in the can, became clearer, and when poured out, the 'blood,' or the deep red something like it, was seen to have settled at the bottom. The young man who shot the robin milked the cow himself on the second morning, still incredulous. The farrier was sent for, and the matter furnished talk for the village." In Tyrol the harrying of a robin's nest entails an attack of epilepsy on the robber; in Bohemia it is believed that he will always suffer from trembling of the hands. This result is also considered by the country-people in Suffolk to follow from killing the bird (see Chambers' "Book of Days," vol. i., p. 678). The same authority declares that a broken leg will follow the taking of a robin's eggs; while on Dartmoor—so Mr. Henderson ("Folk Lore of the Northern Counties," p. 124) tells us—the penalty attached to this act of sacrilege is the smashing, not of a limb, but of all the "clomb," that is, crockery, in the house. In the West Riding of Yorkshire the killing of a robin is sure to cause misfortune. "My father," says a young miner, "killed a robin, and had terrible bad luck after it! He had at that time a pig which was ready for pigging; she had a litter

of seven, and they all died. When the pig was killed the two hams went bad! Presently three of the family had a fever, and my father himself died of it!" (*Notes and Queries*, Ser. IV., vol. viii., p. 503.)

### 5. Sacred legends connected with the robin.

#### *a.* Cross legends.

The Bretons say ("La Bretagne," par M^me^ C. Barbé, p. 361) that while our Saviour was hanging on the Cross (another version relates it was whilst He was bearing the Cross to Calvary), a robin plucked a thorn from His crown, in pity, and, in doing so, wounded his own breast. As a reward he is endowed with a perpetual existence, and with the power of enriching a young girl every year. (See also "Le Foyer Breton," i., p. 107.)

Another Breton legend, given by Rolland, p. 263, runs as follows:—"When the Blessed Saviour was hanging in agony upon the Cross, two birds perched upon it. One was a magpie, which at that time had the gayest plumage of all the feathered race. A tuft adorned her head, and her tail rivalled the peacock's in brilliancy. But alas! her beauty was only equalled by her wickedness, and the evil creature insulted the Redeemer while suffering His last agony. The other was a tiny bird of dusky hue, who timidly approached the Cross, uttering plaintive chirps of sorrow: with her wings she wiped away the tears that flowed from the Saviour's eyes, while with her beak she plucked out the thorns which pierced His brow. Suddenly a drop of blood fell from His forehead on her breast and tinged with scarlet its dull brown feathers. 'Blessed be thou,' said the Lord to her, 'thou sharer in my sufferings. Wherever thou goest happiness and joy shall follow thee; blue as the heaven shall be thy eggs, and from henceforth thou shalt be "the Bird of God," the bearer of good tidings. But thou,' and He addressed the magpie, 'thou art cursed. No longer shall the brilliant tuft and bright feathers, of which thou art so proud and at the same time so unworthy, adorn thee; thy colour shall be sad and sombre, thy life a hard one; ever, too, shall thy nest be open to the storm.'" (For other Cross legends see *infra*.)

#### *b.* Legends connected with the Virgin, saints, etc.

"On assure en Bretagne que le bon Dieu l'appelle dans son Paradis pour lui sucer le sang, lorsqu'il s'en trouve incommode" (!) (Souvestre.)

"Once upon a time a bit of straw was blown into the Blessed Virgin's eye. The redbreast (in Basque *Chindorra*), who was sitting on a bush close at hand, beheld her tears. What did he do? Flew off at once to tell the swallow, and then, carrying in his bill some clear water from a neighbouring stream, he returned with his friend, and perched on the Virgin's face. Then, whilst the redbreast tenderly let the liquid fall into the eye, the swallow gently passed his long tail feathers under the lid, and so removed the straw." (From the Basque, in Melusine, col. 554.)

A legend of the Greek Church tells us that our Lord used to feed the robins round His mother's door, when a boy; moreover, that the robin never left the sepulchre till the Resurrection, and, at the Acesnsion, joined in the angels' song. (*N. and Q.*, Ser. V., vol. iv., p. 96.)

The following occurs in the life of S. Kentigern, Bishop of Glasgow (Baring Gould, "Lives of the Saints," Jan. 13):—"S. Sewan had a pet redbreast, which was wont to eat out of his hand, and to perch on his shoulder, and when he chanted the Psalms of David the little bird flapped its wings and twittered shrilly. Now, Sewan had several lads whom he educated at Culross, and these envied Kentigern, because he was the favourite of the old master, so in spite they wrung the neck of the redbreast,

and charged the favourite boy with having done the deed. But Kentigern took the little bird, and, crying bitterly and praying to God, signed the Cross over it. Then, when the old man returned from church, the bird hopped to meet him as usual, chirping joyously."

S. Kentigern became the founder of Glasgow Cathedral, and in after years the choristers used to sing on the festival of the saint a hymn in which the following verse occurs :—

"Garrit ales pernecatus
Cocus est resuscitatus
Salit vervex trucidatus
Amputato capite ! "

*c*. In "La Dictionnaire des Superstitions," by M. du Chessel, under "Rouge Gorge," the following tradition is narrated. (The translation is by Mr. Baring Gould, and is to be found in his "Sermons for Extempore Preachers," pp. 72, 73.) "Some few monks came into Brittany in ages past, when that country was heathen. They built a rude shed, in which to dwell, and a chapel of moor stones, and then prepared to till the soil. But alas ! they had no wheat. Then one spied a robin redbreast sitting on a cross they had set up, and from his beak dangled an ear of wheat. They drove the bird away and secured the grain, sowed it, and next year had more ; sowed again, and so by degrees were able to sow large fields and gather abundant harvests. If you go now into Brittany and wonder at the waving fields of golden grain, the peasants will tell you all came from Robin redbreast's ear of corn."

"In Scotland," says Mr. McGregor ("Folk-lore of the West of Scotland," p. 111), "there was a popular saying that the robin had a drop of God's blood in his veins, and that therefore to kill or hurt it was a sin." (See above, 4). "The swallow and the yellowhammer, on the contrary, were persecuted for having a share of the devil's blood." For this reason, as well as for having endeavoured to relieve the Saviour's agony, is it that

"Since then no wanton boy disturbs her nest :
Weasel nor wild-cat will her young molest,
All sacred deem the bird of ruddy breast,"—

and that, as they say in Essex,

"The Robin and the Redbreast,
The Robin and the Wren,
If ye take out of the nest
Ye'll never thrive again.
The Robin and the Redbreast,
The martin and the swallow,
If ye touch one of their eggs
Bad luck will sure to follow."

*d*. The Robin redbreast as a fire-bringer.

There are two legends with which I am acquainted in which the descent of fire is *directly* attributed to this bird. One is derived from Guernsey, and is related by Mr. McCulloch in *N. and Q.*, Ser. V., vol. iii., p. 492, who heard it from an old woman, a native of the island. She declared that the robin was the first who brought fire to Guernsey, and that, in crossing the water, his feathers were singed, so his breast has remained red ever since. She added, "My mother had a great veneration for the robin, for what should we have done without fire ? " The second is a Breton version of "the Owl and the Wren " (see under Strigidæ, p. 124), in which the redbreast takes the place of the latter bird. It is also believed by the Bretons that

those redbreasts which have been to seek for the fire can speak Latin. Moreover, that they sing

"Cusse, cusse, cusse, cusse,
Istine spiritum sanctum tuum,
Il y a dix bons dieux."

In the two following traditions the redbreast appears closely connected with the same element. The first is from *N. and Q.*, Ser. I., vol. viii., p. 328, and is contributed by a gentleman who says it was told to him when a child by his nurse, a Caermarthenshire woman. "Far, far away, is a land of woe, darkness, spirits of evil, and *fire*. Day by day does the little bird bear in his bill a drop of water to quench the flame. So near to the burning stream does he fly, that his dear little feathers are scorched, and hence he is named Bronrhuddyn (*i.e.* breast burned, or breast scorched). To serve little children the robin dares approach the infernal pit. No good child will hurt the devoted benefactor of man. The robin returns from the land of fire, and therefore he feels the cold of winter far more than his brother birds. He shivers in the brumal blast: hungry he chirps before your door. Oh! my child, then in gratitude throw a few crumbs to poor redbreast!"

The second is from Rolland, p. 264: "When the wren brought down fire from heaven, and in consequence lost all her plumage owing to its being scorched away, the other birds with one accord gave her, each of them, one of their feathers. The robin, in his anxiety and trouble, came too close to the poor wren, who was in flames, and his plumage took fire also, traces of which are still visible on his breast." (See above, 4; also under Owl, p. 124, and Wren, p. 42.)

Another curious superstition points conclusively in the same direction, given by M. Rolland as prevalent in the west of France. "On Candlemas day the country people kill a cock redbreast, run a spit of *hazel* wood through the body, and place it before the fire, when it at once begins to turn of itself." Now the hazel was a tree sacred to Donar, and "regarded as an actual embodiment of the lightning" (Mannhardt, "Die Götterwelt der Deutschen," p. 193), so here the connection between the bird and the fire is self-evident.

### *e.* The robin as covering the bodies of the dead.

Who does not know the ballad of "The Children in the Wood," and remember how that

"No burial these pretty babes
Of any man receives,
Till Robin Redbreast piously
Did cover them with leaves"?

This, according to Bishop Percy, is taken from an old play by Robert Yarrington, 1601; but we find the tradition earlier. In Johnson's "Cornucopia," published towards the close of the sixteenth century, it is said that "the robin redbreast, if he find a man or woman dead, will cover his face with moss; and some think that if the body should remain unburied he will cover the whole body." It seems to have been an old popular belief, which, Mr. Knight declares, "is found in an earlier book of natural history," but I am unable to discover any written trace of its existence previous to the quotation already cited. The opinion is mentioned, both in prose and verse, by many writers of the seventeenth century. Decker, in his "Villanies discovered by Lanthorn and Candlelight" (1616), says: "They that cheere up a prisoner but with their sight, are Robin Redbreasts, that bring straws in their bills to cover a dead man in his extremity." Isaac

Walton also speaks of the robin "that loves mankind both alive and dead." Shakespeare, *Cymbeline* (Act. IV., sc. v.), alludes to "the ruddock with charitable bill." Drayton ("Noah's Flood," 1537) also calls him "the charitable robinet," and in "The Owl," 1291, writes how that

> "Covering with moss the dead's unclosed eye,
> The little redbreast teacheth charitie";

while Webster (*The White Devil*) couples the wren with the robin as fellow-helpers :—

> "Call for the redbreast and the wren,
> Since o'er shady groves they hover,
> And with leaves and flowers do cover
> The friendless bodies of unburied men."

The same belief prevails in Germany and in Lorraine; while in Haute Bretagne the peasants say that the hen redbreast and the fauvette (*Motacilla orphea*) sing songs of pity around dead bodies, and will not quit them till they are interred.

Grimm ("D. M." ii. 683) suggests that the bird performed this office to the dead in the service of a god, probably Donar, who therefore would not suffer him to be molested.

### *f.* The robin and the wren.

There is an old tradition that the wren is the robin's wife, and there are several rhymes referring to the relationship—*e.g.*,

> "The robin and the wren
> Are God's cock and hen."

> "The robin redbreast and the wren
> Are God Almighty's cock and hen."

Mr. Chambers (p. 187) mentions an addition to this belief—viz., that the wren is the paramour of the ox-eye, or tit; and gives at length a very curious song grounded on this idea, which may also be found in Herd's "Ballads," ii., 209. He also quotes an amusing verse on the matrimonial squabbles of the two birds:—

> "The robin redbreast and the wran
> Coost out about the parritch pan;
> And ere the robin got a spune
> The wran she had the parritch dune."

### *g.* Appearance of redbreasts in Scilly Isles.

Dr. Bastwick, having severely satirised Archbishop Laud, was sent to these islands (1637), "where," says Prynne, "many thousands of robin redbreasts (none of which birds were ever seen in those islands before, nor since) newly arrived at the castle there the evening before, welcomed him with their melody, and within one day or two after took their flight from thence, no man knows whither." These birds were evidently regarded as a sign of the captive's future deliverance, which soon was the case.

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*Genus* LUSCINIA.

## NIGHTINGALE (*Daulias luscinia*)

*i.e.*, night-singer; from A.-S. *Nihte*, gen. of *Niht*, night, and *Gale*, a singer.

Called Barley-bird in East Anglia, because, says Forby, "it

comes in the season of sowing barley." Halliwell remarks that the greenfinch (*Ligurinus chloris*) has the same title sometimes given to it, and that the name is still more frequently applied to the siskin. Stevenson doubts its application to the nightingale, but thinks it belongs to the yellow wagtail (*Motacilla Raii*), which often frequents fields of newly-sown spring corn.

1. Time of arrival.

This is fixed by the old saying :—

"On the third of April (old style)
Come in the cuckoo and the nightingale

which corresponds with the German :—

(*a*) "Wenn Maximus tritt in die Hall
So bringt er uns die Nachtigal ;"

*i.e.* 'When S. Maximus (April 14) enters the porch he brings us the nightingale.'

(*b*) "Tiburtius kommt mit Ruf und Schall,
Er bringt den Kukuk und die Nachtigal ;"

*i.e.* 'S. Tiburtius (April 14) arrives with song and call ; he brings the cuckoo and the nightingale.'

These two birds are frequently found closely united in folk lore and song; Mr. Hardy in his excellent monograph on the "Popular History of the Cuckoo," suggests that the intention is to contrast the quality of their song. He mentions, in support of this, the fable where the cuckoo disputes for superiority in singing with the nightingale ; and the ass, supposed to be the best judge in music on account of his long ears, being called in to decide the question, declares for the cuckoo. Then the nightingale appeals from the unjust sentence to man, singing melodiously. It is remarkable that the Hindoo *kôkilas*, or Indian cuckoo, is for their poets what the nightingale is for ours.

There also appears to have been a popular prognostication with regard to the season which was to follow from the fact of the cuckoo or nightingale being first heard. A question on this subject was asked in *N. and Q.*, Ser. V., vol. i., p. 387, but the only information that could be given was a reference to Chaucer's poem of "The Cuckoo and the Nightingale," in Wordsworth's modernised version of which the following lines occur :—

"I of a token thought which lovers need ;
How among them it was a common tale,
That it was good to hear the nightingale
Ere the vile cuckoo's note be uttered."

2. Haunts of the nightingale.

The nightingale is a very local bird, only partially distributed over England ; being heard very rarely in Devon, never in Cornwall, neither in Scotland nor Ireland. It has been suggested by Mr. Johns that the reason of this is that "it dislikes a long sea voyage, and that when in spring it migrates northward and westward, it crosses the English Channel at the narrowest parts only, spreads itself over the nearest counties in the direction of its migration, but is instinctively prevented from turning so far back again to the south as the south-west peninsula of England." It was currently believed that the nightingale was only to be met with where *cowslips* grew, but this has been proved to be a fallacy ; also that there was some connecting link between this bird and hops. This latter idea was mentioned in *N. and Q.*, Ser. III., vol. i., p. 447,

where it is quoted as being current near Doncaster, but only to be refuted by Cuthbert Bede, who shows that, though *hops* have disappeared from Huntingdonshire, yet nightingales abound. In the same publication, Ser. II., vol. iv., p. 215, a legend is mentioned to the effect that there are no nightingales at at Havering atte Bower, in Essex, because Edward the Confessor, being interrupted there in his meditations, prayed that their song might not be heard again. This, however, is shown to be incorrect; for the Rev. R. R. Faulkner, who was incumbent of Havering, in a work "The Grave of Emma Vale at Havering Bower," says, "Their sweet notes are still heard chanting their Maker's praises amidst the shady groves of this pretty village." St. Leonards Forest, too, in Sussex, was supposed to be shunned for some inexplicable reason by the nightingale. Andrew Boorde, in his "Book of Knowledge," declares that "in the Forest of Saint Leonards, in Southsex, there doth never singe Nightingale, althoughe the Foreste rownde aboute in tyme of the yeare is replenyshed with Nightyngales; thay wyl syng round aboute the Forest and never within the precincte of the Forest, as divers Kepers of the Foreste and other credible persons dwellyng there dyd shew me" (*N. and Q.*, Ser. II., vol. iv. p. 45). The nightingales were said to have once disturbed a hermit who had fixed his cell in the forest; he bestowed a curse upon them in return for their songs, and from that time they were unable to pass the the boundary. (See "Sussex Archæological Collections," xiii. 222.)

3. It was a commonly received belief that the nightingale never sings by day: hence her name. To account for this (which is perfectly erroneous, as she sings by day as constantly as by night, only in the daytime her voice is lost in the chorus of the other birds) the French and German peasants give some curious reasons: *e.g.*—

*a*. One day the nightingale, having overslept herself while perched on a vine stock, found her feet entangled in the tendrils. Hence it is that she never closes her eyes from the time when the vines begin to shoot, and cries in March to the vinedresser: "Taille vite, taille vite, taille vite, que je puisse dormir"; while later on she sings in a softer strain: "Vigneron, ta vigne pousse, pousse, pousse—dans ton bouchet!" (Perron, "Proverbes de la Franche Comté.")

*b*. The country people in the neighbourhood of Toulouse say that the bird sings at night to keep herself awake, fearing lest, in her slumber, the tendrils of the Virgin's Seal (*Tamnus communis*) should twist themselves round her feet.

*c*. The following is from M. Laisnel de la Salle's "Croyances et Légendes du Centre de la France" (ii. 245). "The story goes that once upon a time the blindworm had excellent eyes, but that the nightingale, who was then sightless, borrowed them so that she might attend a fairy wedding. When the festivities were over she refused to return them, and ever since does she continue her song through night and day to soothe the sorrow of her confiding friend."

*d*. Another version of the preceding. "The nightingale and the blindworm had only one eye apiece. Having been invited to the wren's wedding, the former was ashamed to show herself in such a condition, so one day she surprised the snake while asleep and stole his eye. On discovering his loss he said, 'When I catch you asleep, I will get it back!' 'Will you?' was the bird's reply; 'I will take care never to go to sleep again.' And so, ever since, from fear of being caught, the nightingale continues singing both day and night."

*e*. The Westphalian peasants say that the nightingale is a shepherdess, who was once unkind to a shepherd that loved her: she was always promising but

postponing marriage, till at last the shepherd could bear it no longer, and uttered the wish that she might not sleep till the day of judgment. Nor does she; for her voice may be always heard at night, as she cries—'Is tît, is tît, to wît, to wît—Trizy, Trizy, to bucht, to bucht, to bucht'—the last syllables forming the shepherdess's cry to her good dog Trizy. From Kuhn, "Sagen etc. aus Westfalen," ii. 75, quoted by Mr. J. A. Farrer in an article on "Animal Mythology," in the *Cornhill Magazine*.

## 4. Nightingale and thorn.

Sir Thomas Browne, in his "Vulgar Errors," Book III., c. xxviii., places among the difficult cases concerning which he is desirous of awakening consideration, the following—"Whether the nightingal's sitting with her breast against a thorn be any more than that she placeth some prickles on the outside of her nest, or roosteth in thorny and prickly places, where serpents may least approach her." The bird's fear of these reptiles is alluded to in a sermon of Thomas Adams, of Wellington (Works, ii. 485): "They say the nightingale sleeps with her breast against a thorn to avoid the serpent;" and also by Aneau ("Déscription philosophale de la Nature," Paris, 1571) in the following lines:—

"Au printemps, doux et gracieux,
Le rossignol a pleine voix
Donne louange au dieu des dieux,
Tant qu'il faict retentir les boys.
Peur du serpent il chante fort,
Toute nuict et met sa poictrine
Contre quelque poignante espine
Qui le réveille quand il dort."

Shakespeare, too, in "Lucrece," suggests that she uses the thorn to keep herself awake, but not for the same reason:—

"And whiles against a thorn thou bear'st thy part
To keep thy sharp woes waking."

The origin of this belief cannot be ascertained; though a correspondent of the *Zoologist* (1862) declares as a matter of fact that he has twice discovered a strong thorn projecting upwards in the centre of the nest. But, as Mr. Harting remarks ("Ornithology of Shakespeare," p. 127), "it can hardly be doubted that this was the result of accident rather than design; and Mr. Hewitson, in his 'Eggs of British Birds,' has adduced two similar instances in the case of the hedge sparrow."

5. A story in the English "Gesta Romanorum" (Bohn's edition, p. xlix) seems to place the nightingale in the same category as the woodpecker, the swallow, the raven, hoopoe, and other birds possessing the knowledge of wonder-working stones of talismanic power. A certain knight, we read, "was imprisoned in a dreary fortress. He had no light but a little window, whereat scant light shone in, that lighted him to eat such simple meat as the keeper brought him; wherefore he mourned greatly, and made sorrow that he was thus fast shut up from the sight of men. Nevertheless, when the keeper was gone, there came daily a nightingale in at the window, and sung full sweetly, by whose song this woeful knight was sometimes fed with joy: and when the bird left off singing, then would she fly into the knight's bosom, and there this knight fed her many a day, of the victual that God sent him. It befel after, upon a day, that the knight was greatly desolate of comfort. Nevertheless the bird that sat in his bosom fed upon kernels of nuts; and thus he said to the bird,—'Sweet bird, I have sustained thee many a day: what wilt thou give me now in my desolation to comfort me? Remember thyself well, how that thou art the creature of God, and so am I also, and therefore help me now in this great

need.' When the bird heard this, she flew from his bosom, and tarried from him three days ; but the third day she came again, and *brought in her mouth a precious stone*, and laid it in the knight's bosom. And when she had so done, she took her flight and flew from him again. The knight marvelled at the stone, and at the bird, and forthwith he took the stone in his hand, and touched his gyves and fetters therewith, and presently they fell off. And then he arose and touched the doors of his prison, and they opened, and he escaped, and ran fast to the Emperor's palace. When the keeper of the prison perceived this, he blew his horn thrice, and raised up all the folk of the city, and led them forth, crying with a loud voice, 'Lo ! the thief is gone ; follow we him all.' And with that he ran before all his fellows to the knight. And when he came nigh him the knight bent his bow and shot an arrow, wherewith he smote the keeper in the lungs, and slew him ; and then ran to the palace, where he found succour against the law."

6. The note of the nightingale.

In olden times the nightingale had a dog to which he was much attached. One day he tied it to a tree-stump (*sicot*), while he went for a walk ; but alas ! during his absence the animal in his struggle to get loose, pulled up the stump and escaped. The bird laments his loss thus—

"Kaie va, Kaie va !
Fuit, fuit ! sicot, sicot !"

Others say that the nightingale was a sportsman who had four dogs. One day, when out shooting, he tied them to a stump while he refreshed himself at a public-house. But during his absence they ran off. (Haute Bretagne.)

7. The nightingale in medicinal folk lore.

"The eyes and heart of a nightingale," says an old writer, "laid about men in bed, keep them awake. To make one die for sleep.—If any one dissolve them, and give them secretly to any one in drink, he will never sleep, but will so die, and it admits not of cure."

If a person eats the heart of a nightingale, he will sleep only for two hours, because that bird sleeps only for two hours in the night. But this is dangerous, for if the wind changes in the twenty-four hours, he runs the risk of going mad. (Haute Bretagne.)

8. "If any man rob a nightingale of her young," the Bohemians say, "she first of all flies anxiously round the nest in search of them. If she cannot find them, she hangs herself, through grief, from a forked branch." (Krolmus i. 91.)

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*Sub-family* SYLVIINÆ.

*Genus* SYLVIA.

## WHITETHROAT (*Sylvia cinerea*).

1. So called from the white colour of its lower parts; whence (and also from its grey head)

White lintie (Forfar).
Whitecap.

2. Its harsh continuous note has given it the names of
Churr.
Churr muffit (Stirling). For Muffit see below.
Peggy chaw, or Peggy cut-throat (Midlands).
Wheetie why.
Blethering Tam (Renfrew).
Whattie, or Whishie (East Lothian).

3. Because its light-coloured head and neck feathers stand out more thickly than is usual in other birds (Macgillivray), it is called
Charlie muftie, or Muffit (Stirling).
Whey beard: Wheetie whey beard: or Whittie beard.
Beardie (Scotland).
Cf. *Barbechatte* (Anjou).

4. From its habit of creeping through the lower parts of hedges where nettles are abundant, it has received the names
Nettle creeper: Nettle monger (North Riding; Hants).
Nettle bird (Leicestershire).
Hay Jack (Norfolk; Suffolk).
Hazeck (Worcestershire).
Haysucker (Devon).
From O. E. *heisugge* (see under Hedge accentor).
Hedge chicken.

5. It forms its nest of fine pieces of grass, bits of straw, feathers and wool, hence it is called
Feather bird (Northants).
Hay tit (Oxfordshire; Salop).
Strawsmear (Westmoreland).
Strawsmall (West Riding).
Winnell straw, or Jack straw (Salop).
Flax (Salop).

6. Familiar names.
Muggy or Meggie (North).
Peggy (Notts).
Great Peggy (Leicestershire).
Jennie, or Meg cut-throat (Roxburgh).
Billy whitethroat (Salop).

7. Various names.
Caperlinty (Jedburgh).
Bee bird (Devon).

Mr. John says that it is called in France *Grisette*, from its grey plumage, and *Babillarde*, from its constant song.

The name of "Singing sky rocket" has also been applied to it, from its habit of rising quickly, from time to time, straight up into the air, singing all the time.

Cf. *Mousquet* (Gard).

## BLACKCAP (*Sylvia atricapilla*).

1. So called from the tuft of black feathers on the head of the male bird; whence also

King Harry black cap (Norfolk).
Coal hoodie (North Riding).
Black-headed hay-jack (Norfolk).
Black-headed Peggy.

Cf. *Fauvette à tête noire* (France); *Schwarzkopf* (Germany).

2. This bird builds its nest of hay, roots, and hair, in a low bush or hedge, hence its names

Jack straw (Somerset).
Hay bird (Northants).
Hay chat (Northants).
Hay Jack (Northants).

3. Various names.

Mock nightingale.

From the melody of its song.

Nettle creeper.
Nettle monger.

## GOLDEN WARBLER (*Sylvia hortensis*).

1. From the dull white of the throat it has received the names of

Garden whitethroat.
Billy whitethroat (East Lothian).

2. Also called

Streasmear (Westmoreland).
Strawsmear.
Small straw (West Riding).

From the materials of which its nest is composed.

Greater petty-chaps.
Peggy.

*Genus* REGULUS.

## GOLDCREST (*Regulus cristatus*).

1. So called from its crest of golden-coloured feathers, from which, as well as from its diminutive size, it has received the names of

Golden-crested wren.
Golden wren (Stirling).
Golden cutty (Hants).

Cutty is a name for the wren (which see), from its short tail.

Marigold finch.
Tidley goldfinch (Devon).
Kinglet.

2. Various names.

Wood titmouse (Cornwall).
Moon, moonie, or muin (Roxburgh).
Miller's thumb (Roxburgh).
Thumb bird (Hants).

From its tiny size.

Tot o'er seas (*vid. inf.*)
Herring spink (East Suffolk).

"The golden-crested wren is so called, often caught by the hand while 'latching' in the rigging, or among the gear, during the North Sea fishing. These little birds, it seems, are then crossing the seas (see above, Tot o'er seas) for the winter, and have been found, I am told, clustered almost like bees along the hedges near Caistor—so tired as to be taken by hand on shore, as by the sailors at sea. They call the bird 'Woodcock pilot' farther north, being supposed to herald the woodcock two days in advance." ("Sea Words and Phrases along the Suffolk Coast," in the *East Anglian*, vol. iv., p. 115).

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*Genus* PHYLLOSCOPUS.

## CHIFFCHAFF (*Phylloscopus rufus*).

1. The chiffchaff derives its name from its constantly repeated short, hurried note; whence also

Chip chop.
Choice and cheep (Devon—neighbourhood of Totnes).

2. This bird resembles the willow wren or willow warbler (*Phylloscopus trochilus*) very closely in size, colour and habits, hence many names common to the latter bird are applied to it: *e.g.*,

Sally picker (Ireland). "Sally" = sallow (*i.e.* willow).
Peggy (West Riding).
Least willow wren.

3. Various names :—
Lesser petty-chaps.
Thummie.

From its small size.

Bank-bottle or -jug (Bedfordshire).

From the shape and situation of its nest, which, being covered with a dome, is called wood oven ; also, in Oxfordshire, feather poke or feather bed, from its lining.

## WILLOW WARBLER (*Phylloscopus trochilus*).

1. So called from its haunts ; whence also
Willow wren.
Willow sparrow (West Riding).
Sally picker (Ireland). See *ante*, under Chiffchaff.
Ground wren (Scotland).
Ground Isaac (Devon).
From O. E. *heisugge*.

2. The colour of the bird, a yellowish-white in the under parts, has given it the names of
Yellow wren.
Golden wren (Ireland).
White wren (Scotland).

3. Names arising from peculiarities of the nest.

*a*. Locality.
Bank jug.

*b*. Materials.
Hay bird (England; Scotland generally).
Strawsmeer.
Feather bed (Oxon).
Feather poke, *i.e.* Feather bag (West Riding).
Mealy mouth (Craven).
Willie muftie (Scotland).
Muffie wren (Renfrew).
Grass mumruffin (Worcestershire).

*c*. Shape.
Oven bird (Norfolk).
Oven tit (ditto).
Ground oven (ditto).

4. From its diminutive size it is called
Tom thumb (Roxburgh).
Miller's thumb.

5. Various names.
Huck muck.
Bee bird.
Sweet Billy (Notts).
Peggy (West Riding; Salop).

A name given also to the wren.

Smeu, Smooth, or Smeuth (Stirling).

### WOOD WARBLER (*Phylloscopus sibilatrix*).

1. So called from its partiality to woodland districts; whence also

Wood wren (Somerset).

2. Its various shades of colour have given this bird the names

Yellow wren.

From its bright yellow throat and streaks over the eyes.

Green wren.

From the green hue of the upper plumage.

Linty white.

From the pure white of the under parts of the body.

3. Also called

Hay bird (West Riding).

Because the nest is composed of dried grass, and placed on the ground in thick herbage.

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*Genus* ACROCEPHALUS.

### REED WARBLER (*Acrocephalus streperus*).

1. So called from its frequenting reeds; whence also

Reed wren.
Water sparrow (Salop).

2. The name of night warbler is also given to this bird, because its cry may be heard at almost all hours.

### SEDGE WARBLER (*Acrocephalus phragmitis*).

1. This bird derives its name from its favourite haunts being the banks of sedgy pools and streams. Also called

Sedge wren.
Sedge bird.

Sedge marine (Norfolk).
Water sparrow (Salop).

2. It continues its song after dusk and through the night; hence

Night singer (Ireland).
Irish nightingale (ditto).
Scotch nightingale (Roxburgh ; Stirling).

3. Various names.

Hay tit (Oxfordshire).

From the material of which its nest is composed.

Leg bird.
Sally picker (Ireland). See Willow Warbler, 1.
Chat.

From its sharp cry.

Chamcider, or Channy (Hants).

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*Genus* LOCUSTELLA.

## GRASSHOPPER WARBLER (*Locustella nævia*).

1. So called from its cry, which resembles the note of the cricket or grasshopper ; whence

Grasshopper lark.
Cricket bird (Norfolk).

2. It has also the name of Brake hopper, from its habit of lurking in thick bushes.

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*Sub-family* ACCENTORINÆ.

*Genus* ACCENTOR.

## HEDGE SPARROW (*Accentor modularis*).

1. A bird mostly seen in hedges : hence its name. Also called

Hedge spurgie (Aberdeen).

From Icel. *spörr*, a flutterer.

Bush sparrow (Stirling).
Whin sparrow (East Lothian).
Field sparrow, or Fieldie (Roxburgh).
Hedge warbler ; Hedge accentor ; Hedge chanter

Hedge chat (Northants).
Hedge spick, or Hedge mike (Sussex).
Dykesmowler.
Isaac, or Hazock (Worcestershire).
Segge (Devon).

The three latter names are from the Old English *heisugge*. (See Chaucer, "Assemblie of Foules," 612, where the cuckoo is called

"Murdrer of the heysugge on the braunch
That brought thee forth.")

2. Familiar names.

Billy (Oxon).
Cuddy (Craven).
Dickie (Lancashire).

3. Names given from the dusky colour of the plumage.

Blue Isaac (Gloucestershire). See above.
Blue Tom (Scotland).
Blue sparrow (Scotland).
Blue Jannie.
Blue dickie (Renfrew).

The throat, neck, and breast are of a bluish-grey.

Black wren (Ireland).
Dunnock (Lancashire; West Riding; Somerset).
Doney (Lancashire).

4. From its short piping note it is called

Titlene (North).
Pinnock.
Philip or Phip.

A term for the house sparrow (which see).

5. Other names.

Hempie (Yorkshire; Scotland).
Shuffle-wing (Craven).

From its peculiar shake of the wings, becoming a flutter in the breeding season.

Reefouge (Ireland).
Creepie (Kirkcudbright).

From its movement, which is that of short hops, or a creeping attitude.

Sparve (West Cornwall). A.-S. *spearwa*, a sparrow.
Blind dunnock (Somerset).

"From its stupid blindness in not distinguishing the cuckoo's egg when laid in its nest." (Cecil Smith.)

*Family* CINCLIDÆ.

*Genus* CINCLUS.

**DIPPER** (*Cinclus aquaticus*).

1. So called from its diving propensities, which, combined with the dark back, give it the names

Bessie ducker.
Water ouzel.
Water blackbird (Scotland; Ireland).
Water crow (Westmoreland; Lowlands generally).
Water thrush (Cornwall).

Cf. *Merle plongeur* (France), *Wasseramsel* (German Switzerland).

2. The white breast and blackish upper plumage have caused it to be called

Piet (Scotland).
Water piet (Scotland).
River pie (Ireland).

3. Various names.

Water crake.
Kingfisher (Highlands generally; Ireland).

From its flight, which is like that of the kingfisher, rapid and straightforward. For the same reason it is believed in some parts of England to be the *female* kingfisher, the blue and red bird being the male.

Ess cock (Aberdeen).
Water Peggie (Dumfries).
Water colly (Somerset).

For "colly" see under Ring ouzel (*Turdus torquatus*).

The Norwegian name is *Fosse konge, i.e.* King of the waterfall.
The Gaelic appellations for the dipper are
*Gobha uisge—i.e.* Water (black)smith, and
*Gobha dhubh nan allt—i.e.* Blacksmith of the stream.

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*Family* PANURIDÆ.

*Genus* PANURUS.

**BEARDED TITMOUSE** (*Panurus biarmicus*).

Bearded pinnock.

From the tuft of black feathers, resembling a moustache, beneath the eye. Cf. *Mésange à moustache* (France).

Reed bunting (Essex).
Reed pheasant, or simply, pheasant (Norfolk).
Lesser butcher bird.

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*Family* PARIDÆ.

## TITMICE.

Titmouse is compounded of *Tit* = small, and A.-S. *Mâse*, a name for several small birds, akin to *Meise* (Germany), *Mésange* (France).

Grimm tells us that these birds were held to be sacred and inviolable by the ancient Germans, and severe penalties were exacted from those who entrapped them. He also adds that the Lettons, who call them "Sihle," regard them as prophetic and auspicious, and even call a soothsayer "Sihlneeks." On the other hand, in the neighbourhood of Valenciennes titmice are hunted down by the children, who believe that they betrayed the Saviour. (Hégart, "Dict. Rouchi-François.")

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*Genus* ACREDULA.

### BRITISH LONG-TAILED TITMOUSE (*Acredula rosea*).

1. This bird owes its name to its great length of tail, hence it is called

Long-tailed Mag or Long-pod (Midlands).
Long-tailed pie.
Long-tailed capon (Hants; Norfolk).
Long-tailed mufflin.

From the resemblance that the tufted feathers surrounding the face present to a muffler.

2. Whence also are derived

Mumruffin, or hedge mumruffin (Worcestershire; Salop).
Ragamuffin.
Fuffit (East Lothian).

3. The penduline form of the nest, and the feathers which compose the lining, have obtained for the bird the names of

Jack in a bottle.
Bottle Tom.

Bottle tit (West Riding; Berks; Bucks; Midlands; Salop).
Bag (Northants).
Poke pudding or Poke bag (Gloucestershire; Salop).
Pudding bag (Norfolk).
Feather poke.

Called in the south of France, *Débassaire*, *i.e.* Stocking maker, for the same reason.

Oven bird or oven builder (Stirling).
Can bottle (Salop).
Bum barrel (Notts).
Bush oven (Norfolk).
Oven's nest (Northants).
Hedge jug.

4. Various names.

Prinpriddle, *i.e.* Tree babbler (Cornwall).
French magpie.

From its colour. Cf. *Pie mouchet* (Jura).

Bum towel (Devon).
Bellringer (Kirkcudbright).
Millithrum, *i.e.* Miller's thumb.

From its small size.

Nimble tailor (Salop).

5. In Shropshire the nest of this bird is called "Hat full o' feathers."

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*Genus* PARUS.

## GREAT TITMOUSE (*Parus major*).

1. From its black head it has obtained the names

Black cap, or black capped lolly (Northants; West Riding).
Black-headed Bob (Devon).
Black-headed tomtit (Salop; Stirling).

2. Also called

Sit ye down.
Joe Ben (Suffolk).
Ox eye (Midlands; Salop; North Riding; Ireland).
Big ox eye (Forfar; East Lothian; Roxburgh).

So called from its size. In France the gold-crest (*Regulus cristatus*) is called *œil de bœuf*.

Saw sharpener (Roxburgh).
Sharp saw (Norfolk).

The two last names are given to it from its peculiar, harsh, grating call-notes. Cf. *Serrurier* (Côte d'Or), *Accuzzaferra* (Sardinia).

Pridden pral, *i.e.* Tree babbler (West Cornwall).
Heckymal (Dartmoor).

From its powerful beak.

Tom noup—*i.e.* nope (Salop). See under Bulfinch.

In Spain this bird is called *Cid* (Lord) or *Cid paxaro* (Lord sparrow); also *Guerrero, i.e.* warrior, or rather brawler—because titmice are always quarrelling with other birds, or among themselves.

3. Weather prognostic.

The saw-like note of this bird foretells rain.

## BRITISH COLE TITMOUSE (*Parus Britannicus*; Ger. *Kolmeise*).

1. The following names refer to this bird's glossy black head and neck:—

Coal, or Coaly hood (Scotland).
Coal hooden (East Lothian).
Black cap (Salop; Stirling).
Black ox-eye (Forfar).
In Ireland it is called Tomtit.

2. In the old laws of the Rheingau the ensnarer of a cole tit was severely fined: "Wer eine kolmeise fienge mit limen oder mit slagegarn, der sal unserme herrn geben eine falbe henne mit sieben hunkeln." (Grimm, "D. M.," ii. 683.)

## MARSH TITMOUSE (*Parus palustris*).

Black cap (Notts).

Cf. *Colle norette*—i.e. *Calotte noire* (France).

Joe ben (East Anglia).
Saw whetter (Staffordshire). See under Great Titmouse.

## BLUE TITMOUSE (*Parus cæruleus*).

1. So called from its prevailing colour; whence also—

Blue cap or Blue bonnet (Salop; West Riding; Scotland).
Blue yaup (Scotland). See below, 3.
Blue ox-eye (Forfar).
Blue spick (North Devon).

2. From the strong pecks which it deals with its bill are derived the names (all used in Devon and Cornwall)—

Hickmall; Hackmal; Heckymal; Hagmal; Hackeymal; Titmal.

3. Its loud chirping cry is shrill and often repeated; hence

Yaup (Renfrew).
Tinnock.
Pedn-paly, or Pridden pral—*i.e.* Tree babbler (West Cornwall).
Pinchem (Beds).
Tidife.

4. Various names.

Tomtit (General).
Jenny tit (Suffolk).
Nun.

From the white fillet round its head. Cf. *Nonette* (France), *Amitaie* (Guernsey).

Allecampagne (Cornwall).
Bee bird (Hants).

Because it is supposed to stand at the entrance of the hives and destroy the bees as they come out. Cf. *Croque abeille* (France).

Billy biter (Salop; North Riding).

Because the female, while sitting on her eggs, does not hesitate to peck the fingers of those who try to remove her.

Pickcheese (Norfolk).
Tomnouf (Salop).
Jenny wren (Craven).
Ox-eye (East Lothian). See under Great Tit.
Stone chat (Ireland).

Because its nest is usually in the hole of a wall or tree.

5. Weather prognostic.

"The titmouse foretells cold when crying, Pincher." (Wilsford, "Nature's Secrets," p. 132.)

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*Family* SITTIDÆ.

*Genus* SITTA.

**NUTHATCH**—*i.e.* Nut Hacker (*Sitta cæsia*).

So called from the bird's habit of striking and splitting with its beak filberts or hazel nuts; whence also

Nut topper—*i.e.* Nut tapper.
Nutcracker (Salop).

Woodcracker.
Jobbin (Northants).
Nutjobber (Berks).

"Job"=to strike with a pointed instrument (Gael. *Gob*=a beak). If the opening of the hole in which is its nest be too large, the bird lessens it by plastering the sides with mud; hence it is known in Hampshire as the Mud-stopper. Cf. *Maçon, Picmaçon* (Lorraine).

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*Family* TROGLODYTIDÆ.

*Genus* TROGLODYTES.

**WREN** (*Troglodytes parvulus*).

A.-S. *Wrenna*; whence

1. Wranny (Cornwall).
Wrannock (Orkney Isles).

2. From its short bob-tail it has the names of
Cutty or Cut (Dorset; Devon; Hants; Pembroke).
From Welsh *Cwt*, a short tail.
Scutty (Sussex).
Cutteley wren (Somerset).
Bobby wren (Norfolk).

3. From its diminutive size it is called
Tiddy or Tidley wren (Essex).
Tom tit (Norfolk; Craven).
Titty todger (Devon).

4. Familiar names.
Kitty, Jenny (General).
Jennie crudle.
Tintie (Notts).
Sally (Ireland).

5. Various names.
Stag, Tope (Norfolk; Cornwall).
Crackil (North Devon).
From its cry. Cf. *Crac-jan* (St. Lo).
Robin redbreast (Shetland Isles).
Our Lady's hen (Old Scotch).

"Malisons, malisons, mair than ten,
That harry our Lady of Heaven's hen!"

Cf. *Poulette de Dieu, Oiseau de Dieu* (Normandy), titles given by the French peasants to the wren, because, so they say, she was present at the birth of the

Infant Saviour, made her nest in His cradle, and brought moss and feathers to form a coverlet for the Holy Child. ("Laisnel de la Salle," ii. 249.)

### 6. Folk lore of the wren.

#### (1) The wren as king of birds.

The tradition of the sovereignty of the wren over the feathered race is widely spread. Hence we find the Latin name for the bird to be *Regulus*, the Greek *βασιλίσκος*, the French *Roitelet*, *Roi des oiseaux*, *Roi de froidure*, *Roi de guille*, *Roi Bertaud*, the Spanish *Reyezuelo*, the Italian *Reatino* or *Re di siepe* (king of the hedge), the Swedish *Kungs fogel*, the Danish *Fugle Konge* or *Elle Konge* (alder king), the German *Zaunkönig* (hedge king), *Schneekönig* (snow king). As to the origin of these titles the following legend (which Wolf, "Zeitschrift für Deutsche Mythologie," i. 2, says appeared in a Jewish collection of animal tales, composed in the thirteenth century) professes to give the necessary information. It is common to Ireland, France, Germany, Norway, and Scotland; and a story, almost identical, with the exception of the linnet (*Linota cannabina*—which see), instead of the wren, being thehero, is told by the Ojibways of North America ("Algic Researches," ii. 216). The following version is taken from Thompson's "Birds of Ireland," ii. 350. In a grand assembly of all the birds of the air, it was determined that the sovereignty of the feathered tribe should be conferred upon the one who should fly highest. The favourite in the betting was of course the eagle, who at once, and in full confidence of victory, commenced his flight towards the sun: when he had vastly distanced all competitors, he proclaimed with a mighty voice his monarchy over all things that had wings. Suddenly, however, the wren, who had secreted himself under the feathers of the eagle's crest (another account says, tail), popped from his hiding-place, flew a few inches upwards, and chirped out as loudly as he could, "Birds, look up and behold your king!" (It may be noticed that a Turkish story related by Rosenöl, i. 33 [Stuttgart, 1813], makes Eblis [Satan], enter the ark concealed under the tail of the ass.)

The rivalry of the eagle and the wren is alluded to by Aristotle, who says of the latter that he is *ἀέτῳ πολέμιος*; and by Pliny, "Hist. Nat." x. 74: "Dissident aquila et trochilus, si credimus, quoniam rex appellatur avium."

There are two sequels of the above legend, of which one will be found under Strigidæ, 5, p. 124; the other, known in Ireland and Norway, was as follows: —After the wren had triumphantly proclaimed himself as king, the other birds allowed his claim, and he was duly elected to that office. But the eagle was so exasperated at the decision that he caught up the wren in a rage, flew up high in the air with his rival in his claws, and dropped him to the ground! The wren was more frightened than hurt, but he lost part of his tail in the fall, and has ever since gone about with only half of that necessary appendage. A variation of this legend relates that the angry eagle gave the wren such a stroke with his wing as he came down, that from that time he has never been able to fly higher than a hawthorn bush (or elder tree).

The knowledge that he is king of birds has made the wren, so the Bretons declare, the proudest and most conceited of all the feathered kind. Tiny though he is, he hops about on the dead branches of trees, trying in vain to snap them with his weight, and piping with petulant anger "Bisqua, qu'on es fort"—*i.e.* 'Hang it, how strong it is!' or, as some assert, "Dir, dir, pa na dor" —*i.e.* '(it must be) steel, steel, since it does not break!'

#### (2) Wren hunting.

*a.* In Ireland.

To hunt the wren," says Mr. Neligan, quoted in Thompson's "Birds of Ireland," i. 349, is a favourite pastime of the peasantry of Kerry on Christmas

Day. This they do, each using two sticks, one to beat the bushes, the other to fling at the bird. It was the boast of an old man, who lately died at the age of a hundred, that he had hunted the wren for the last eighty years on Christmas Day. On St. Stephen's day the children and young men exhibit the slaughtered birds on an ivy bush decked with ribbons of various colours, and carry them about, singing a song of which there are various versions." Of these versions I will give two, of which the first is given in Crofton Croker's "Researches," p. 233 :—

"The wren, the wren, the king of all birds,
S. Stephen's Day was caught in the furze ;
Although he is little, his family's great,
I pray you, good landlady, give us a treat.

My box, it would speak, if it had but a tongue,
And two or three shillings would do it no wrong,
Sing holly, sing ivy—sing ivy, sing holly,
A drop just to drink, it would drown melancholy.

And if you draw it of the best
I hope your soul in heaven may rest ;
But if you draw it of the small,
It won't agree with the wren-boys at all."

It will be seen from the above that the hunting of the bird in some districts took place on the 26th.

The next wren carol is taken from *Notes and Queries*, Ser. I., xii. 489, Ser. II., i. 102, where it is stated as being sung at Waterford and Youghal.

"INTRODUCTION.

To Mr. . . . we've brought the Wran,
He is the best gentleman in the land :
Put in your hand, pull out your purse.
And give us something for the poor Wran ! !

I.

The Wran, the Wran, the king of all birds,
S. Stephen's day was caught in the furze ;
Although he is little, his family's great,—
I pray, young landlady you'll fill us a treat !
*Chorus :* Sing overem, overem, droleen : (*bis*)
Sing overem, overem, chitimicore, hebemegola,
tambereen.

II.

If you fill it of the small
It won't agree with our boys at all :
But if you fill it of the best,
I hope your soul in Heaven may rest !
*Chorus :* Sing overem, etc.

III.

It is the Wran, as you may see,
'Tis guarded in a holly tree ;
A bunch of ribands by his side,
And the . . . boys to be his guide.
*Chorus :* Sing overem, etc.

IV.

On Christmas Day I turned the spit,
I burned my fingers, I feel it yet:
Between my finger and my thumb
I eat the roast meat every crumb.
*Chorus:* Sing overem, etc.

V.

We were all day hunting the Wren,
We were all day hunting the Wren;
The Wren so cute, and we so cunning,
He stayed in the bush while we were running.
*Chorus:* Sing overem, etc.

VI.

When we went to cut the holly
All our boys were brisk and jolly;
We cut it down all in a trice,
Which made our Wren boys to rejoice.
*Chorus:* Sing overem, etc."

The last three verses are peculiar to Waterford.

Mr Thompson tells us that this custom has been dramatised. "It was lately (Sept. 1848) posted on the walls of Belfast, as about to be performed at one of the minor theatres. Having a desire to see the nature of the piece, the manager's copy was kindly placed at my service. The title is "The Wren Boys: or the Moment of Peril; an original drama, in two acts. By Thomas Egerton Wilks, Esq. . . . Author of —— etc., etc. As performed in the London Theatres." In Act II., sc. i. is the village of Shanagolden, in Munster. The wren boys enter confusedly, one bearing a bush with a wren in it; and the first four lines, nearly as above given (Mr. Croker's version), are sung, followed by chorus." It may be observed that Mr. Croker noticed the subject in a communication made to the British Archæological Association on Feb. 4th, 1848, in connection with a proclamation by Richard Dowden, Mayor of Cork, issued at the close of 1845, with the intention, as headed, to "prevent cruelty to animals." The old popular ceremony long prevalent in Ireland, of hunting and killing a wren on St. Stephen's day, was then forbidden, but still lingers in some parts of Connaught.

With regard to the origin of the custom, of which I shall speak later on (*g*), there are several traditions current in Ireland. One story giving the reason is: "St. Stephen when being brought to execution was escaping from his sleeping jailors, when a wren flew on the face of one of them and woke him." This would account for his being killed on St. Stephen's day. Another version is that our Saviour was hiding in the garden, and a wren, by noisy chirping, showed the place to the soldiers and servants of the high priest. Another legend is: "A wren at the siege of Doolinn, by hopping on a drum, woke up the Danes and prevented them being surprised" (*Folk-Lore Record*, p. 108, "Notes on Irish Folk Lore"). A newer version relates that on one occasion James II.'s forces were on the point of surprising King William's army early in the morning, when some wrens, attracted probably by the fragments of the preceding night's repast, alighted on the head of a drum which had served for a table, and the noise of their bills in the act of picking awoke the drummer, who instantly beat to arms and saved William's army from defeat. The wren, accordingly, has ever since been a prime favourite with the Orange party, and an object of persecution to the friends of James.

*b.* In the Isle of Man.

Mr. Train, in his "Account of the Isle of Man" (Douglas, 1845), vol. ii., pp. 124-7, says that on St. Stephen's Day a group of boys go from door to door with a wren suspended by the legs in the centre of two hoops crossing each other at right angles, decorated with evergreens and ribands, singing lines called "Hunt the Wren" :—

> "We hunted the wren for Robin the Bobbin,
> We hunted the wren for Jack of the Can ;
> We hunted the wren for Robin the Bobbin,
> We hunted the wren for every one."

If, at the close of this rhyme, they are fortunate enough to obtain a small coin, they give in return a feather of the wren ; and before the close of the day the bird may be sometimes seen hanging almost featherless. It is then taken to the sea-shore or some piece of waste ground, and solemnly interred. In the previous century, as it appears from Waldron's "Description of the Isle of Man," p. 155, the hunting took place on December 24th, and the wren was buried in the churchyard, the feathers being religiously preserved, as each of them was believed to be an effectual preservative from shipwreck for one year. Mr. Train also gives the following tradition as to the origin of the ceremony : "In former times a fairy of uncommon beauty exerted such undue influence over the male population, that she, at various times, induced by her sweet voice numbers to follow her footsteps, till by degrees she led them into the sea, where they perished. This barbarous exercise of power had continued for a great length of time, till it was apprehended that the island would be exhausted of its defenders ; when a knight-errant sprang up, who discovered some means of countervailing the charms used by this siren, and even laid a plot for her destruction, which she only escaped at the moment of extreme hazard by taking the form of a wren. But, though she evaded instant annihilation, a spell was cast upon her by which she was condemned to re-animate the same form every succeeding New Year's Day, until she should perish by a human hand." In consequence of this legend every man and boy in the island devotes the hours from the rising to the setting of the sun on each returning anniversary to the hope of extirpating the fairy ; the wren's feathers, as already observed, being considered as a charm against shipwreck. With reference to this latter belief MacTaggart writes in the "Scottish Gallovidian Encyclopædia," p. 157, that Manx herring-fishers dare not go to sea without one of these birds taken dead with them, for fear of disasters and storms. Their tradition is of a sea sprite that hunted the herring tack, attended always by storms ; and at last it assumed *the figure of a wren* and flew away. So they think that when they have a dead wren with them all is snug. Another version of the above legend relates that the enchantress set out on her milk-white palfrey, accompanied by her admirers on foot, till, having led them into a deep river, she drowned six hundred of the best men the island had ever seen, and then flew away in *the shape of a bat.* To prevent the recurrence of a like disaster it was ordained that the women should henceforth go on foot and follow the men, which custom is so religiously observed, that if by chance a woman is observed walking before a man, whoever sees her cries out immediately, "*Tehi ! Tehi !*" which, it seems, was the name of the enchantress who occasioned this law. (Waldron, p. 188.)

In a MS. account of Manx customs the wren song is given as follows. I premise by stating that each line is repeated four times, in the same manner as the first and last are :—

> "'We'll away to the woods,' says Robin the Bobbin,
> 'We'll away to the woods,' says Richard the Robin,
> 'We'll away to the woods,' says Jackey the Land,
> 'We'll away to the woods,' says every one.

What will we do there ?' says Robin the Bobbin, etc.
'We'll hunt the wren,' says Robin the Bobbin, etc.
'Where is he ? where is he ?' says Robin the Bobbin, etc.
'In yonder green bush,' says Robin the Bobbin, etc.
'How can we get him down ?' says Robin the Bobbin, etc.
'With sticks and stones,' says Robin the Bobbin, etc.
'He's down, he's down,' says Robin the Bobbin, etc.
'How can we get him home ?' says Robin the Bobbin, etc.
'We'll hire a cart,' says Robin the Bobbin, etc.
'Whose cart shall we hire ?' says Robin the Bobbin, etc.
'Johnny Bill Fell's,' says Robin the Bobbin, etc.
'How can we get him in ?' says Robin the Bobbin, etc.
'With iron bars,' says Robin the Bobbin, etc.
'He's at home, he's at home,' says Robin the Bobbin, etc.
'How will we get him boiled ?' says Robin the Bobbin, etc.
'On the brewery pan,' says Robin the Bobbin, etc.
'How will we get him eaten ?' says Robin the Bobbin, etc.
'With knives and forks,' says Robin the Bobbin, etc.
'Who's to dine at the feast ?' says Robin the Bobbin, etc.
'The king and the queen,' says Robin the Bobbin, etc.
'The pluck for the poor,' says Robin the Bobbin, etc.
'The legs for the lame,' says Robin the Bobbin, etc.
'The bones for the dogs,' says Robin the Bobbin, etc.

'He's eaten, he's eaten,' says Robin the Bobbin,
'He's eaten, he's eaten,' says Richard the Robbin,
'He's eaten, he's eaten,' says Jackey the Land,
'He's eaten, he's eaten,' says every one."

A somewhat similar song is to be found in David Herd's "Collection of Ancient and Modern Scottish Songs, Heroic Ballads, etc." : Edinburgh, 1776. (repr. Glasgow, 1869, vol. ii., p. 210) :—

"'Will ye go to the wood ?' quo' Fozie Mosie ;
'Will ye go to the wood ?' quo' Johnnie Rednosie ;
'Will ye go to the wood ?' quo' Foslin 'ene ;
'Will ye go to the wood ?' quo' brither and kin.

'What to do there ?' quo' Fozie Mosie, etc.
'To slay the wren,' quo' Fozie Mozie, etc.
'What way will ye get her hame ?' quo' Fozie Mozie, etc.
'We'll hire cart and horse,' quo' Fozie Mozie, etc.
'What way will ye get her in ?' quo' Fozie Mozie, etc.
'We'll drive down the door cheeks,' quo' Fozie Mozie, etc.

'I'll hae a wing,' quo' Fozie Mozie ;
'I'll hae anither,' quo' Johnnie Rednosie ;
'I'll hae a leg,' quo' Foslin 'ene ;
'And I'll hae anither,' quo' brither and kin."

*c.* In Pembrokeshire.

Mr. Halliwell says, in his "Popular Rhymes and Nursery Tales," p. 165, that in this county it is customary on Twelfth Day to carry about a wren, termed the King, enclosed in a box with glass windows, surmounted by a wheel, from which are appended various coloured ribands. It is attended by men and boys, who visit the farmhouses and sing a song, the following fragments of which are all that have come under my observation :—

"For we are come here
To taste your good cheer.

And the King is well dressed
In silks of the best.
He is from a cottager's stall
To a fine gilded hall."

He adds that tradition connects the ceremony with the death of an ancient British king at the time of the Saxon invasion.

The following are two other wren songs from the same county; contributed by Mr. J. Tombs to *Notes and Queries*, Ser. III., v. 109, 110.

"Joy, health, love and peace,
Be to you in this place.
By your leave we will sing
Concerning our King:
Our King is well drest
In silks of the best;
With his ribbons so rare
No king can compare.
In his coach he does ride
With a great deal of pride:
And with four footmen
To wait upon him:
We were four at watch,
And all nigh of a match:
And with powder and ball
We fired at his hall.
We have travell'd many miles
Over hedges and stiles,
To find you this King,
Which we now to you bring.
Now Christmas is past,
Twelfth Day is the last,
Th' Old Year bids adieu—
Great joy to the New."

In the sixteenth line of the song, "hall" is used for the wren's nest, as in the preceding fragment quoted by Mr. Halliwell; and fitly so, for it is a hall or covered place. And it is from the shape of his nest that the wren gets his name, meaning *covered*.

Of the second song only two verses are given, viz.:—

"'Where are you going?' says the milder to the malder:
'Where are you going?' says the younger to the elder:
'I cannot tell,' says Fizzledyfose;
'To catch Cutty Wren,' says John-the-red-nose.

'How will you get him?' says the milder to the malder;
'How will you get him?' says the younger to the elder;
'I cannot tell,' says Fizzledyfose;
'With guns and great cannons,' says John-the-red-nose."

It is believed that this, which bears a striking resemblance to the Manx versions (see above, *b*), used to be sung when the party was setting out to search for the wren which they wanted for the Twelfth Night. Mr. Sikes, in his most interesting work "British Goblins," gives the music of the above song, adding that the ballad was a very long one.

*d*. In Derbyshire.

In Derbyshire hunting wrens on Sunday is called "*jenty*" (*i.e.* Jenny) *hunting*.

*e.* In Essex.

Mr. Henderson, in his Folklore of the Northern Counties," p. 125, says that at Christmas-tide boys are accustomed to kill wrens and carry them about in furze bushes from house to house, asking a present, and singing the verse—

"The wren, the wren, the king of the birds," etc.

*f.* In France.

The inhabitants of the town of Ciotat, near Marseilles, so Sonnini tells us ("Travels," vol. i., p. 16), armed with swords and pistols, commence an anniversary hunting of the wren at the beginning of Nivose (which commenced on the 23rd of December). When one is captured, it is suspended, as if a heavy burden, from the middle of a long pole, borne on the shoulders of two men, carried in procession through the streets, and weighed on a great pair of scales, after which there is a convivial entertainment. The name given to the bird is as curious as the festival. They call it the Polecat, or *Père de la bécasse* (Father of the Woodcock), on account of the resemblance of its plumage to that of the woodcock, supposed by them to be engendered by the polecat. At Carcassonne (Dept. Aude) the wren is carried about by the young people of the place, on the last day of December, the hunting of the bird having taken place on the first Sunday of the month, when the youth by whom it is caught, or killed, is dignified by the title of King. On Twelfth Day the town is again paraded, the Wren being borne solemnly upon a staff adorned with a garland of olive, oak, and mistletoe. A somewhat similar custom prevailed at Chateau Ponsac, in Berry, where the inhabitants, on New Year's Day, brought a wren in solemn procession to the Prior, as their seignorial lord, in token of their fealty. It is remarkable that, according to M. Michelet ("Origines du Droit Français," p. 250), the same usage was practised in Franconia.

*g.* This custom is undoubtedly sacrificial in its origin, the wren, as a lightning bird, being sacred to Donar, the lightning god. The time also of its celebration —viz., at the commencement and end of the first twelve nights of the sun's return from the winter solstice—points in the same direction. Moreover, in North Germany the squirrel is hunted at Easter (Wolf, "Beiträge," i. 78); and Simcock ("D. M." 555) tells us that in some parts of the same country a dead fox is carried about by the village boys at Midsummer. Both these animals, from their red colour, were under the protection of the same deity. (For Norman and Breton legends of the wren as a fire bringer, see under Strigidæ, p. 124.) A variation of these, communicated to M. Rolland from the Dept. of the Loiret, was as follows :—The wren, having succeeded in obtaining the coveted fire, sets off on her downward flight to earth ; but alas ! her wings began to burn, and she was obliged to intrust her precious burden to the care of the robin, whose plumage also burst into flames, and who bears the traces on his breast. The lark then came to the rescue, and brought the prize in safety to mankind for their use. In some parts of Brittany they say that the wren fetched fire from hell, and got her feathers scorched as she passed through the keyhole.

Hence it is that the wren, alike with the robin and the swallow, is a sacred bird, and to rob its nest is an act to be regarded with horror. In the Pays de Caux such a crime is believed to be punished by the destruction of the culprit's dwelling by lightning ; and in Touraine it is popularly supposed that the fingers of the man who kills a wren will gradually shrivel away and finally drop off !

### (3) The wren in saintly legends.

S. Calasius, while at work in his vineyard, being overcome by the heat, took his frock off and hung it on the branch of a neighbouring tree. Judge of his

amazement at seeing a wren fly into its folds and lay an egg! The saint was so delighted that he spent the night in prayer and thanksgiving to God.

In the life of S. Malo a similar occurrence is related, with this difference—that he allowed the bird to remain undisturbed till the eggs were hatched.

S. Dol, seeing that his fellow monks were disturbed at their devotions by the crying and screeching of the numerous birds in the woods contiguous to the monastery, collected them all together in the convent yard, imposed silence upon them, and dismissed them, at the same time forbidding them to return. An exception was made in favour of the wrens, whose presence cheered without distracting the inmates. (A. de Ponthieu, "Les Fêtes légendaires.")

(For the robin and wren as man and wife, see above, under "Robin," 5 *f*, p. 18.)

### (4) Omens drawn from the wren.

In a work entitled "A Sailor Boy's Experience" (Hamilton, 1867), it is stated that, in that neighbourhood, previous to setting out on their voyage, the sailors catch a wren and pluck some feathers from it, tossing them up in the air, when, according as they fall or are carried away by the wind, the success of the herring fishery is prognosticated. (*Zoologist*, 1094.)

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*Family* MOTACILLIDÆ.

*Genus* MOTACILLA.

## PIED WAGTAIL (*Motacilla lugubris*).

1. From the habit of jerking their tails while running, and also when alighting after a short flight, this family of birds derive their names of

Wagtail. Cf. *Hochequeue* (France), *Coditremola* (Naples).
Quaketail.
Waggie (East Lothian).
Nannie wagtail (Notts).
Willie wagtail (Orkney Isles).

2. From its habit of frequenting ponds and streams the pied wagtail is also called

Water wagtail (a name applied to each species).
Wattie wagtail.
Waterie (Forfar).
Wattie (Westmoreland).

3. "From the fanciful similarity between the beating of the water with its tail by the bird while tripping along the leaves of a water lily, and the beating in the water by washerwomen"

(Johns' "British Birds in their Haunts," 171), it has received the titles of

Dishwasher (Berks, Bucks, Oxfordshire; Craven; Salop).
Moll washer.
Peggy dishwasher (Kent).
Molly washdish (Hants; Somerset).
Polly washdish (Dorset).
Nanny washtail.
Dishlick (West Cornwall).
Washerwoman.
Cf. *Batte lessive; Lavandière* (France).

4. Various names.

Seed lady (Peebles).

Because they begin to appear in the north about the beginning of March. (See under Grey Wagtail.)

Devil's bird, or Deviling (Ireland).

From the constant uncanny motion of its tail.

White wagtail.

5. In Dorset the tapping of a water wagtail with its bill at a window is considered as a sign of approaching death.

## GREY WAGTAIL (*Motacilla melanope*).

Also called

Winter wagtail (South of England).

So called because it comes in autumn and retires northward in spring.

Barley seed bird (Yorkshire).
Oat seed bird (ditto).

Because it makes its appearance in the north of England about March, and is then most abundant in those elevated parts of the county which are better adapted for the growth of oats than of wheat.

Yellow wagtail (East Lothian; Ireland).

From the bright yellow of its neck and breast.

## YELLOW WAGTAIL (*Motacilla Raii*).

1. So called from the light yellow hue of its neck and lower parts, whence also

Yellow waggie.
Yellow Molly (Hants).

2. From its constant attendance on cattle, feeding on the

insects they disturb from the ground by their movements, it receives the names of

Cow bird.
Cow kloot, or Cow klit.

Cf. *Bergère; Vachette* (France), *Bovarina* (Piedmont), *Kuhstelze* (Bavaria).

3. Various names.

Waterie wagtail (Aberdeen).
Spring, or Summer wagtail (North).

Because it is a summer visitor, going southwards in the early autumn.

Called by the Spaniards *Pepita*, a name denoting "something exquisitely feminine and graceful"; and *Balarina* (*i.e.* dancing girl) in the neighbourhood of Mentone, for the same reason.

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*Genus* ANTHUS.

## MEADOW PIPIT (*Anthus pratensis*).

1. Called Pipit from its short and feeble note; whence also

Titling, or Tit (General).
Tietick (Shetland Isles).

Cf. *Titi* (Anjou).

Titlark.
Cheeper.
Peep (Forfar).
Teetan (Orkney Isles).
Wekeen (Kerry).

2. As opposed to the Tree pipit, which frequents wooded districts, it is called

Meadow titling.
Meadow lark (Hants).
Field titling.
Earth titling (East Lothian).

3. From its attachment to commons and waste lands it has received the names of

Moss cheeper (Scotland).
Moss cheepuck (North Ireland).
Heather lintie (Cumberland; Westmoreland).
Ling bird (Cumberland; West Riding).
Moor titling (Craven).
Moor tahling (ditto).
Moor tit.

4. Also called

Cuckoo's Sandie, or Cuckoo's titling (Durham).

Because it is the cuckoo's constant companion. With reference to this habit of the bird, Mr. Fitzgerald states, in "Long Ago," p. 81, that in Ireland the charitable wish is heard, if two people are quarrelling, "May you never hear the cuckoo or the little bird that follows it." It is there believed that "the latter is ever trying to get into the cuckoo's mouth, and if this should once happen, the end of the world would come." The small size of the titling contrasted with that of its companion gave rise to the proverbs, "Like the cuckoo and the titlark," or "Like the gowk and the titling," applied to one who follows another, as the jackal the lion. "Many an old applewoman at the fairs," says Galt, in "Sir Andrew Wylie," "on seeing the gowk and the titling approach (as two boys were called), watched their tempting piles of toys and delectables. with gleg een' and staff grasped to repel some pawkie aggression."

Hill sparrow (Orkney and Shetland Isles).

The Gaelic name is *Glasian* (*i.e.* grey bird).

## TREE PIPIT (*Anthus trivialis*).

Various names.

Pipit lark.

Tree lark.

Tit lark (incorrectly).

Grasshopper lark (incorrectly).

Short-heeled field lark (Scotland).

So called because the claw of the hind toe is not so long as the toe itself.

Field lark.

## ROCK PIPIT (*Anthus obscurus*).

1. So called from being confined exclusively to the sea shore; whence also—

Rock lark.

Sea titling, or sea lark.

Sea lintie (East Lothian).

Rock lintie (Aberdeen).

Gutter teetan (Orkney Isles).

Shore teetan (ditto).

Tang sparrow (Shetland Isles).

*Tang* = seaweed.

2. Various names.

Teetuck, or Teetan (Shetland Isles).

From its cry.

Dusky lark.

*Family* LANIIDÆ.

*Genus* LANIUS.

## GREAT GREY SHRIKE (*Lanius excubitor*).

From Icel. *shrikja*, a shrike, lit. "shrieker."

"Called 'excubitor,' or watchman, because fowlers in France fasten it close to the living bird which they use as a lure. When the shrike sees the hawk it utters a shrill cry of terror, and thus gives notice of its enemy's approach, enabling the fowler to draw the string of the net and enclose the falcon, before the latter has time to carry off the bait." (Yarrell.)

Butcher bird.

So called because it impales beetles and small birds on thorns, for the purpose of pulling them to pieces. Cf. *Boucher* (Jura).

White wisky John.

From the pure white under plumage and ashen grey head and back, and wavering character of its flight.

Murdering pie.

From the similarity in colour of its plumage to that of the magpie.

Mattages.

Old obsolete name, given by falconers, and perhaps equivalent to preceding. Cf. *Mat'agasse* (Alpes)—from *Mater=tuer* (from *mactare*), and *agache* or *agasse*=magpie. See under Magpie, 1.

M. Rolland thinks that the shrike is so called because it frequently attacks and overcomes the magpie.

## RED-BACKED SHRIKE (*Lanius collurio*).

1. From its cruelty and voracity this bird is called

Butcher bird (General). See under preceding.
Murdering bird.
Nine killer.

"From a notion that it always kills and impales nine creatures before it begins its meal" (Wood).

Cf. *Neuntödter* (Germany).

Weirangle, or Wariangle (Yorkshire).

Cf. *Würgengel* (Germany), *i.e.* 'Worrying or Destroying angel'; called also *Würger*, or 'Worrier, throttler.'

2. Various names.

Jack baker (Hants; Surrey; Sussex).
French magpie (Sussex).
Pope (Hants).
Cuckoo's maid (Hereford).

Because it feeds the young cuckoo.

Flasher or Flusher (Cornwall).

From the ruddy colour of its plumage ; or perhaps *i.q.* Flesher, *i.e.* butcher.

3. It is believed in the arrondissement of La Châtre that the shrike brought to the Roman soldiers the thorns with which our Lord was crowned; for which reason, whenever a peasant boy catches one of these birds, he applies to it the *lex talionis*, and sticks thorns into its head and neck. (Laisnel de la Salle, ii. 242.)

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*Family* AMPELIDÆ.

*Genus* AMPELIS.

## WAXWING (*Ampelis garrulus*).

Bohemian chatterer.

In German Switzerland the country-people give this bird the names of *Pest*, and *Sterbe-vogel* (*i.e.* Pest, or Death-bird) ; and say that the waxwing is only seen in their country every seven years, and that war, pestilence, and famine are inseparable from its visits. (Schinz, "Fauna Helvetica.")

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*Family* MUSCICAPIDÆ.

*Genus* MUSCICAPA.

## SPOTTED FLYCATCHER (*Muscicapa grisola*).

Cf. *Gobe-mouche* (France); *Fliegenschnappe* (Germany).

1. From the site of its nest, which is generally placed against a wall, or on a beam or rafter of an outbuilding, this bird is called

Wall, or Beam bird (Berks ; Bucks ; East Anglia ; Hants).
Rafter or Rafter bird.
Wall-plat (Devon).

"Plat" = a flat beam lying on the top of a wall.

2. From the white colour of the under parts it has the names

White wall (Northants).
White baker.

3. Various names.

Cobweb (Northants).

From its use of spiders' webs in the construction of its nest. So in France it is called *L'araigne* or *L'éraigne*.

Post bird (Kent).

From its habit of perching on a post, watching for flies.

Bee bird (Norfolk).

From its fondness for bees.

Chancider.

Chait (Worcestershire).

From its note.

Cherry sucker; Cherry chopper ; Cherry snipe.

Names given to the flycatcher from its being so often seen on, or flying round, cherry trees : the many insects that feed on them being the attraction.

4. In Somerset these birds are supposed to bring good luck to the homestead they frequent, hence the rhyme :—

"If you scare the fly-catcher away,
No good luck will with you stay."

In Salop the name of Miller is given to young flycatchers.

**PIED FLYCATCHER** (*Muscicapa atricapilla*).

Cold or Cole finch (Northumberland; Cumberland; Westmoreland).

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*Section* OSCINES LATIROSTRES.

*Family* HIRUNDINIDÆ.

*Genus* HIRUNDO.

**WALLOW** (*Hirundo rustica*). A.-S. *Swawe.*

1. It is a common saying that the low flight of swallows is a sign of rain, not only in our own country, but in France, where they say :—

"Quind chés arondelles volent à terre
Adiu la poussière."

and in North Italy :—

"Le rundane che ula a bass
L'è segnal d'un gran slaass."

Hence Gray writes in his first Pastoral :—

"When swallows fleet soar high and sport in air,
He told us that the welkin would be clear."

2. The swallow is universally considered as the herald of spring and summer. Among the Greeks a festival was observed in honour of this bird, and at Rhodes the children were accustomed to go from house to house carrying with them young swallows

and singing a swallow song, which has been handed down by Athenæus, and thus rendered into English :—

"He comes ! he comes ! who loves to hear
Soft sunny hours, and seasons fair :
The swallow hither comes to rest
His sable wing and snowy breast."

Even at the present day, says Grimm ("D. M.," 723), does the usage prevail in Greece. On the 1st of March bands of boys and girls parade the streets, singing ballads and carrying a pole surmounted by the image of a swallow carved in wood. In England the first swallows arrive about the 11th of April, and are succeeded by others at intervals, until the middle or end of May. The Russian peasants, in their springtide calendar (Ralston's "Songs of the Russian People," p. 213), believe that on the 25th of March the swallow comes flying from Paradise, and brings with it warmth to the earth. The same day the Festival of the Annunciation is noted in South Germany, by the saying, "Our Lady's Annunciation brings back the swallows" ; while in Mecklenburg, St. George's day, April 23rd, marks their appearance. The country people about Bergamo, observing them at an earlier date, have the following proverbs with regard to the date of their return :—

*a.* "A san Gregorie Papa
Le rundane le passa l'acqua,"—

*i.e.*, 'on the Festival of St. Gregory the Pope (March 12th), the swallow crosses the water (*i.e.* arrives in Europe).'

*b.* "Per san Giusep le rundane le passa 'l tèc :
Passa o no passa, el frèd el ne lassa,"—

*i.e.*, 'on St. Joseph's Day (March 19th), the swallows fly over the roofs ; whether they fly or not, the cold weather has gone.'

*c.* "Per san Benedèt
Ve la rundana sota 'l tèc,"—

*i.e.*, 'on St. Benedict's Day (March 21st), the swallow flies over the roofs.'

*d.* The French say of their appearance,

"A l'Annonciation (March 25th),
Les hirondelles viennent annoncer la belle saison" ;

and of their departure,

"A la Nativité (Sept. 8th),
Elles nous quittent avec l'été,"—

which corresponds with the North German proverb :—

"Um Mariä Geburt
Ziehn die Schwalbe fort."

In Saxony they are supposed to arrive on Palm Sunday and to leave on Sept. 14th (popularly called Crucis, the Festival of the Exaltation of the Cross) ; while the Russians believe that they hide or bury themselves in wells on Simeon's day (Sept. 1st) ; and in Haute Bretagne the peasants say that they always arrive before Maundy Thursday, in order to be present at the commemoration of the Saviour's crucifixion.

### 3. Hibernation of swallows.

The fact of the migration of swallows was by no means considered as such by the old naturalists. Olaus Magnus, in the nineteenth book of his "History of the Northern Nations," gives the following information on the subject:—"Although the writers of many natural things have recorded that the swallows change their stations, going, when winter cometh, into hotter countries; yet, in the northern waters, fishermen oftentimes by chance draw up in their nets an abundance of swallows, hanging together like a conglomerated mass." He adds also, that "in the beginning of autumn they assemble together among the reeds; where, allowing themselves to sink into the water, they join bill to bill, wing to wing, and foot to foot." Swan, in his "Speculum Mundi," p. 400, noticing this account, is rather incredulous, but qualifies his doubts by asking, "Why may it not be as well as the Barnacle or Bean Geese? of which it is certain that they first grow on trees."

### 4. Folk lore of the swallow.

#### (1) The swallow stone.

To the swallow is attributed, by popular belief, the power of finding a stone endued with wondrous properties. "In Normandy," says Mr. Baring Gould ("Myths of the Middle Ages," Ser. II., p. 133), quoting from Mlle Bosquet's "Normandie Pittoresque," "the swallow knows how to find upon the sea-beach a pebble which has the marvellous power of restoring sight to the blind. The peasants tell of a certain way of obtaining possession of this stone. You must put out the eyes of a swallow's young, whereupon the mother-bird will immediately go in quest of the stone. When she has found it and applied it, she will endeavour to make away with the talisman, that none may discover it. But if one has taken the precaution to spread a piece of scarlet cloth below the nest, the swallow, mistaking it for fire, will drop the stone upon it." This tradition is analogous to that concerning the woodpecker and the springwort (see *infra.*, p. 101), and is quite sufficient to enable us to class the swallow as a fire-bringing bird. Longfellow alludes to it in "Evangeline":—

> "Oft in the barns they climbed to the populous nests in the rafters,
> Seeking with eager eyes that wondrous stone which the swallow
> Brings from the shore of the sea to restore the sight of its fledglings;
> Lucky was he who found that stone in the nest of the swallow!"

*Here* the stone lies in the nest; and this agrees with the communication made to the *Zoologist* for 1866, p. 523, by Dr. Lebour, who says: "I met last summer, in Brittany, with a curious fact relating to the habits of the common house swallow. In Brittany there exists a wide-spread belief among the peasantry that certain stones found in swallows' nests are sovereign cures for certain diseases of the eye. These stones are held in high estimation, and the happy possessor usually lets them on hire at a sou or so a day. Now, I had the good fortune to see some of these swallow stones, and to examine them. I found them to be the hard polished calcareous opercula of some species of *Turbo*, and although their worn state precludes the idea of identifying the species, yet I am confident that they belong to no European *Turbo*. The largest I have seen was three-eighths of an inch long and a quarter of an inch broad; one side is flat, or nearly so, and the other is convex, more or less so in different specimens. Their peculiar shape enables one to push them under the eyelid across the eyeball, and thus they remove any eyelash or other foreign substance which may have got in one's eye; further than this, they have no curing power; the peasants, however, believe they are omnipotent. The presence of these opercula in swallows' nests is very curious, and leads one to suppose that they must have been brought there from some distant shore in the swallow's stomach." This was the idea of Pliny, Albertus Magnus, Avicen, and

others, who taught that the stone in question, which they called *Chelidonius*, was to be discovered in the belly of the eldest of a brood of young birds, if searched for before or at the August full moon. Then, being tied to the arm or hung round the neck, it was a remedy against epilepsy. In Tyrol it is believed that this stone is deposited in his nest by the swallow after a regular use of the same abode for seven consecutive years.

The following description of the swallow-stone is given by Beurard, in his "German-French Dictionary of Mining Terms" (Paris, 1819)—"Schwalbenstein = Pierre d'hirondelle : sortes de petites pierres siliceuses, de forme sphérique ou arrondie, qui ont aussi porté les noms de pierres de sassenage, pierres optalmiques, de fausses chélidoniennes, et enfin de chélonites, et que l'on a prétendu, se trouver dans le ventre des jeunes hirondelles, mais qui ne sont autre chose que des grains de quartz pyromaque ou de quartz agate roulés par les eaux, ce qui leur a fait prendre la forme ovoide."

(2) *a*. Celandine, or swallow's herb.

Besides possessing a stone which could cure blindness, swallows, according to old authors, taught men the healing properties of the celandine, by employing it for the same purpose. This herb was so named either because (Plin., "Hist. An." xxv. 8) it flowered at the coming of the swallows and withered at their departure, or because (Plin. viii. 27) when the eyes of their young ones were out, they cured them again with it.

So Chester ("Love's Martyr," p. 122) writes of

> "The artificiall nest-composing swallow
> * * * *
> His yong ones being hurt within the eies
> He helps them with the herb calcedonies."

*b*. Another property of this herb is mentioned by Leoprechting ("Aus dem Lechrain").—If you can get some swallow's eggs, unseen by the parents, boil them hard and replace them in the nest, you may then obtain possession of a certain herb which the old birds fetch to make them soft again, and which, if carried in the pocket, ensures always the possession of money.

(3) The heart of the swallow, worn round the neck, was supposed to render the wearer attractive : it was good also for strengthening the memory : while the present to a lady of a gold ring which had lain in a swallow's nest nine days engendered love for the donor in her breast. ("Album des Chasseurs," 1823.)

5. The superstitions and legends respecting the swallow present the bird in a twofold aspect—either as honoured, cherished and reverenced, or as dreaded and abused. I propose to consider each in turn.

(1) Generally speaking, from its familiar and domestic habits, and when regarded as the herald of spring, the swallow is looked upon as a propitious bird, and respected accordingly. In France it has the names of *Poule de Dieu*, and "Messenger of Life" ; in Germany, of *Marienschwalbe* and *Herrgottsvogel* ; in Sardinia, *Pilloni de Santa Lucia* ; while the Arabians call it the "Bird of Jesus" (Labrosse, "Gazophylacium Linguæ Persarum," 1684, p. 356), and the "Bird of Paradise," because to it alone are open the gates of Eden, closed against every other living thing. Our own country-people couple the swallow and the martin with the robin and the wren as sacred birds in the adages—

> "The robin and the wren
> Are God Almighty's cock and hen ;
> The martin and the swallow
> Are the two next birds that follow."

There are variations of the last line: *e.g.*—

"Are God Almighty's shirt and collar," [Essex,]

or,

"Are God Almighty's bow and arrow," [Northants,]

or,

"Are God Almighty's mate and marrow," (*i.e.* companions,)

[A Cheshire version,

or,

"Are God Almighty's birds to hollow"—

"where," says Mr. Halliwell, "the word *hollow* is most probably a corruption of the verb *hallow*, to keep holy."

(2) Nothing can bring better luck to a house and its inmates than for swallows to build their nests round it; or, on the other hand, be a worse omen than for the nests to be forsaken. Terrible penalties are paid by the rash hand that destroys or robs a swallow's nest. Rain will continuously descend on his crops for a month, or his cows will cease to give milk, or else give it mixed with blood (North Riding); or death, or some great calamity, will fall upon his family (Scotland, Sussex, East Riding). Mr. Henderson ("Folk-Lore of the Northern Counties," p. 122) gives the following instance of the last belief. "A farmer's wife near Hull told a friend of mine, Mrs. L——, how some young men, sons of a banker in that town, had pulled down all the swallows' nests about a little farm which he possessed. 'The bank broke soon after,' she went on, 'and, poor things, the family have had nought but trouble since!'" All these and many more superstitions are current in Germany, where, particularly in Tyrol, the swallow is especially held to be sacred: *e.g.*, the despoiler's house will be destroyed by lightning, or his village will decline in prosperity. In Franche Comté it is held that if a swallow's nest be removed one of the animals in the stable will fall lame before the year is out (Monnier, "Trad. Pop.," p. 156); and throughout France the same immunity from annoyance is granted them, except at Arles, where they are shot right and left.

(3) The first sight of a swallow (like the first note of a cuckoo) is a matter of no small importance among the German peasants. In Westphalia, when a man sees the first swallow, he should look if there be a hair under his foot. If he find one, his future wife's hair will be of the same colour. (Kelly, p. 102.) In Bohemia, if one swallow be seen by a maiden, she will be married during the year; if a pair first meet her eye, she will remain single. The sight of a sitting swallow is accounted fortunate, of one on the wing the reverse. (Wuttke, "Volksaberglaube," p. 190.) In the Mark it is necessary to wash the face immediately after the first swallow has been seen, otherwise one must expect to be sunburnt and freckled during the year (Busch).

(4) There are several sacred legends in which the swallow figures, some of which are worth noticing.

*a.* When our Saviour was crucified, a little bird came and perched upon the cross, peered sorrowfully down upon the Sufferer, and twittered, "Hugsvala, svala, svala, Honom!" *i.e.*, "Console, console, console Him," and hence it obtained the name of Sla. (Norway.) This resembles the Russian story of the swallows and sparrows (see p. 61).

*b.* It was the swallow who removed the crown of thorns from our Saviour's head while hanging on the cross. In her efforts the sharp spines pierced her breast; hence its ruddy colour. (La Rochelle.)

The same is related of the robin and crossbill. (See under each.)

*c.* One day, while pursued by the Jews, our Lord took refuge in a pleasant wood, where He seated Himself on the grass, tired by His long and hasty

flight. After a little time some magpies, who had collected in the trees near Him, flew down and pricked His naked feet and uncovered head with thorns which they had gathered; but the swallows, moved with tender pity, busied themselves in extracting them from His flesh. Then the Saviour pronounced the following sentence: "You magpies shall henceforth make your nests on the tops of the tallest trees, a despised and hated race; while ye swallows shall build in safety, sheltered from danger and beloved by those under whose eaves ye dwell." ("Bulletin de la Soc. Hist. de S. Jean d'Angély," 1865.)

*d.* In the Ober Innthal the swallows are believed to have helped the Lord God in building the sky.

*e.* "Why the swallow is the friend of man is thus explained in an old legend. Adam, when descending from Paradise to the earth, first put his foot on the island of Serendib, and Eve descended at Jedda. Adam, being alone, began to lament his fate in so piteous a manner that the cherubim, touched by his lamentation, complained to the Almighty. God sent the swallow, which came to Adam, and begged him to give her some hair of his whiskers. Some historians say that Adam had neither beard nor whiskers in Paradise, and that it began to grow only after his having been driven from the presence of the Lord. However this may be, the swallow having got some of his whiskers, flew to Jedda, where she took also some of Eve's hair, and made in that way the first step of uniting them together again. In recompense for what the swallow carried on as internuncio between Adam and Eve, she is allowed to nestle in the dwellings of men." (Jones' "Credulities Past and Present," 436.)

(5) But, as was before remarked, the swallow is also viewed in another light. In some cases, and amongst some nations, particularly those belonging to the Celtic race, the reverence and respect in which the bird is held proceed from fear; and its influence upon mankind, instead of being propitious, is sinister and diabolical. Hence, in Ireland, according to Dr. Whately, it is called "devil's bird," and the country-people hold that there is a certain hair on every one's head which, if a swallow can pick off, the man is doomed to eternal perdition. So, too, in some parts of Scotland it is said to have a drop of the deil's blood in its veins; and in Caithness is called "witch hag." There, as we see from Smiles' "Life of Robert Dick," p. 97, a belief is current that if a swallow flies under the arm of a person it immediately becomes paralysed. In Franche Comté (according to De Nore, "Dictionnaire des Superstitions—Hirondelle"), a somewhat similar idea prevails: viz., that if a swallow flies under a cow's belly the milk will become blood, and the cow is said to be *arondalée, i.e.* swallow-struck. The only way to cure this disease is to tie the animal up in its stall, milk it, and sprinkle the milk at a spot where cross-roads meet. In England the presence of the swallow is sometimes considered as ominous of death: in Yorkshire, for instance, where its descent down a chimney is a sure sign of the speedy decease of one of the inmates of the house. The same result is believed in Norfolk to follow from an unusually large gathering of these birds round a dwelling, with the addition that with them the departing spirit will take flight. A correspondent of *Notes and Queries*, when one day visiting the sick child of a poor woman—a girl about twelve—had the following remark made to her by the mother: "A swallow lit upon her shoulder, ma'am, a short time since, as she was walking home from church, and that is a sure sign of death." (Dyer's "Folk Lore," 69.) With this we may compare the following couplet from Parker's "The Nightingale" (1632), referring to swallows—

> "And if in any's hand she chance to die,
> 'Tis counted ominous, I know not why."

M. Gubernatis, ii. 241, gives several instances of the bad esteem in which this bird was held by the ancients, saying that "though beautiful and propitious in spring, it becomes ugly and almost diabolical in the other seasons."

In Germany and the northern nations this may have arisen from the swallow's chesnut red head and throat, which would connect it with the lightning god Thor. For the same reason the redbreast and the woodpecker, both lightning birds, are looked upon with mixed feelings of reverence and terror (see pp. ).

### 6. Swallow rhymes.

As the swallow skims the water after flies, the Scotch children throw stones at him, and say—

"Swallow, swallow, sail the water!
Ye'll get brose and ye'll get butter."

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"Hirondèle, belle hirondèle,
En hiver où t'en vas-tu?
En Athène
Chez Etienne
Pourquoi m'l'demandes-tu?"

Tonain, "Dictionnaire du Patois Saintongeais."

The mountaineers of the Vosges have a very high idea of the swallow's love for order and cleanliness. They say that when the birds return to their old nests, if they find dirt and poverty in the household, you may hear them twittering to each other—

"Quò j'n'allò, quò j'n'allò, tot a pien,
Quò j'èrvénò, il n'y é pu rien, il n'y é pu rien,
Chéïe bien, chéïe bien!"

*i.e.*, 'Quand nous nous en allons, tout est plein; quand nous revenons il n'y a plus rien! il n'y a plus rien! perde bien, perde bien!—*i.e.* vous êtes des destructeurs' (Oberlin, "Patois du Ban de la Roche.")

This is similar to the Mecklenburg rhyme—

"To Joar, ar ik furk genk,
Wören alle Skoppen un Skiuren vull;
Un ar ik weer kam,
Is Alles verquickelt, verquackelt, verheert und verkehrt."

*i.e.*, 'Last year, when I went away, all the sheds and barns were full; but now, when I come back, I find everything befouled, squandered, emptied and wasted.'

### 7. Proverbial saying.

"One swallow does not make a summer (or spring)," has its equivalent in many languages.

8. "When swallows gather," they say at Sherringham, in Norfolk, "before they leave, and sit in long rows on the church leads, they are settling who is to die before they come again."

*Genus* CHELIDON.

## MARTIN (*Chelidon urbica*).

A nickname, like Robin ; hence the bird is named after S. Martin, as a proper name : see under.

1. Names given to the bird from its frequenting the dwellings of man.

House martin.
Eaves or Easin swallow (Craven).
Window swallow.

2. Also called

Swallow (Roxburgh ; West Riding).
Martin swallow (East Lothian).
Martlet. (See under Swift.)

A corruption of *Martnet*, short for *Martinet*, which is French term for the swift (*Cypselus apus*).

3. For the association of the martin and the swallow in nursery rhyme, see under Swallow.

4 The following, from the Harz, is a duologue between a church swallow and a house swallow (a swift and a martin) ; the subject being a farmer's wife :—

*The swift.*—" Dat Weibsbild, dat zarte Bild,
Wiel's in de Karke geit ! "

*i.e.*, ' Look at that picture of a woman, that delicate picture, how she walks into church ! '

*The martin.*—" Wenn du siehst, wenn ik seh,
Wenn se Middags in ehr Köken steht,
Süt seut as de Düwel in de Hölle."

*i.e.*, ' If you saw her, as I see her, in her kitchen about noontide (you would say) she looked like the devil in hell.'

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*Genus* COTILE.

## SAND MARTIN (*Cotile riparia*).

1. So called from its habit of excavating with its bill a nest in sandy banks ; whence also

Bank martin.
Bank swallow (Craven).
Pit martin.
Sand, or River, swallow.
Sandy swallow (Stirling ; Roxburgh).

Sand backie (Forfar).
Bitter (*i.e.* Biter) bank (Roxburgh).
Bitterie (Roxburgh).

2. Various names.

Shore bird.
Witchuck (Orkney Isles).

*i.e.*, Witch Chick (see under "Swallow," p. 55).

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*Section* OSCINES CURVIROSTRES.

*Family* CERTHIIDÆ.

*Genus* CERTHIA.

## TREE CREEPER (*Certhia familiaris*).

1. The following names are given to the bird from its habit of climbing :—

Creeper.
Tree climber.
Tree, or Bark-speiler, *i.e.* climber (East Lothian ; Stirling).
Creep tree (Norfolk).
Tree clipper (Oxon).

Cf. *Grimpereau* (France) ; *Trepador* (Spain) ; *Rampiat* (Piedmont) ; *Grüper* (Germany).

2. From its climbing like the Picidæ, it is called

Woodpecker (Ireland ; Perthshire). Cf. *Petit pec* (Saintonge).
Brown woodpecker.

3. Various names.

Tomtit (Ireland).
Cuddy (Northants).

4. The Tree creeper is one of the birds sacred to S. Martin in France, and called after him

Martinet (Lisieux).
L'oiseau de Saint Martin (Toulon).

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*Section* OSCINES CONIROSTRES.

*Family* FRINGILLIDÆ.

*Sub-family* FRINGILLINÆ.

*Genus* CARDUELIS.

## GOLDFINCH (*Carduelis elegans*).

1. So called from its bright variegated plumage; whence also
Goldie, or Gold spink.
Goud spink, or Gooldspink (Scotland).
Gool french (Devon).
Redcap; King Harry or King Harry Redcap (Salop; Suffolk; North Riding).

So it is called in Brittany, *Pabor—i.e. Pape d'or*—because of the likeness its crimson head bears to the papal tiara, and also from the golden-yellow colour of part of its plumage; and the name given in the same province to the best looking young fellow in a village is, *Ar pabor euz ann hol baslred—i.e.* the goldfinch of the young men.

Seven-coloured linnet; Speckled Dick (Salop).
Foolscoat. (Sir Thos. Browne, "Birds of Norfolk.")
Lady with the twelve flounces (Salop).
Sheriff's man (Salop).

From its bright-coloured feathers bearing a resemblance to a showy livery.

Proud tailor (Derby; Notts; Leicester; Somerset; Northants; Warwick).
Called in Gaelic, *Las air-choille—i.e.*, Flame of the wood.

2. From its fondness for thistle seeds it is called
Thistle finch (Stirling).

Cf. *Cardonneret* (France); *Cardello* (Italy); *Distelfink* (Germany).

3. Various names.
Linnet (Salop).
Jack nicker (Northants; Salop; Cheshire).
Draw bird or Draw water.

From its being taught, when in its cage, to draw up water in a bucket. (Sir Thos. Browne, "Birds of Norfolk.") So it has in Holland the title of *Pitter* or *Putter*=French *Puiseur—i.e.* drawer of water.

Sweet William.

From its melodious cry.

4. In the north, young goldfinches are called Grey Kates or Pates. By London fanciers the name of Brancher is given to a goldfinch in its first year.

*Genus* CHRYSOMITRIS.

## SISKIN (*Chrysomitris spinus*).

From Swedish *siska* (*i.e.* chirper).

1. Also called Aberdavine. It was a long time before I could discover the derivation of this word, but I feel sure that it is the same as alder-finch, equal to the German *Erlenzeisig*; and the French prov. (dial. Vienne) *Pou* (*i.q. pullus*) *de vergne*, and *Ché d'aune*. With regard to this Mr. Thompson (i. 266) writes: "They (*i.e.* siskins) were feeding on the seed of the elder. . . . They fed wholly on the alder, and looked beautiful, hanging like little parrots, picking at the drooping seeds of that tree."

2. Folk lore.

The siskin, like the swallow and the raven, is believed in Bohemia and Tyrol to have the power of procuring a stone which renders the possessor invisible. (Grohmann, p. 72; Zingerle, p. 91.)

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*Genus* LIGURINUS.

## GREENFINCH (*Ligurinus chloris*).

1. So called from the yellowish-green of its plumage; whence also

Green linnet (Norfolk; Lancashire; Scotland generally).
Green bird.
Green olf (Norfolk). For Olf, see under Bullfinch.
Green grosbeak.
Greeney (Cumberland; Forfar).

Cf. *Verdière* (France); *Grünling* (Germany).

2. Various names.

Peasweep.

Because one of its notes, sounding thus, closely resembles that of the peewit (which see).

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*Genus* COCCOTHRAUSTES.

## HAWFINCH (*Coccothraustes vulgaris*).

(Haw = a hedge, hence berry of hawthorn. A.-S. *haga*, an enclosure.)

1. From its fondness for cherry stones, it is called

Cherry finch.
Berry breaker (Hants).

Cf. *Beque cerise* (France), also *Casse noix*. For the same reason it is known in Norway by the title of "Cherry bird," and in Sweden by that of *Sten knöck* or Stone-breaker.

2. Various names.

Grosbeak.

Cf. *Gros bec* (France).

Coble (Sir Thos. Browne's "Birds of Norfolk").
Kate.

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*Genus* PASSER.

## HOUSE SPARROW (*Passer domesticus*).

A.-S. *spearwa*, from Icel. *sporr*—lit. a flutterer; whence also

1. Spadger.

Spurdie (Orkney Isles).
Sprig, Sprug, Sprong, Spug (Roxburgh; Perth; East Lothian).
Spyng (Kirkcudbright).

2. Various names.

Craff (Cumberland).
Row-dow or Roo-doo (Northants).
Thatch or Thack sparrow (Northants; Salop).
Easing sparrow (Salop).

From the eaves, or easing, of houses being their favourite resort for nesting purposes.

Philip or Phip.

From the cry of the bird. Cf. Filip (Britanny). So Catullus:

"Sed circumsiliens, modo huc, modo illuc,
Ad solum dominum usque pipilabat,"—

and Shakespeare, *King John*, Act I., scene i.:

*Gurney loq.*—"Good leave, good Philip.
*Bastard.*—Philip! Sparrow!"

3. Proverbial saying:

"There are no sparrows at Lindholme."
(Hatfield Chase.)

"Tom o' Lindholme being left at home to protect the corn from sparrows, to save trouble got them all into the barn, put a harrow into the window to keep them in, and starved them to death." (*N. and Q.*, Ser. I., vol. viii., p. 532.)

Lindholme is about three miles from Hatfield, in Yorkshire.

4. Superstitions relative to sparrows.

*a.* A sparrow, if caught, must not be kept alive, otherwise the parents of the catcher will die. (Kent.)

*b.* Sparrows gifted with prophetic power.

"Look, my dear," said S. S's. wife to him one morning as he lay in bed—"look at that kite flying round the room!" He saw nothing, but heard a noise like a large bird flapping its wings. A few minutes afterwards a sparrow came, dashed its bill against the window, and flew away again. "Oh!" said Mrs. S., "something is the matter with poor Edward" (her brother). She had hardly said the word when a man on horseback rode up and said, when S. opened the door to him, "Don't frighten poor Mary, but master has just expired!" The messenger had only ridden from Somers Town to Compton Street, Soho. I had this story from S. himself, who was possessed with a notion that the sparrow that tapped at his window was the soul of his brother-in-law." (Kelly, "Curiosities of Indo-European Folk-Lore," pp. 104, 105.)

The following instance is recorded by Aubrey, date 1643:—"As Major John Morgan, of Wells, was marching with the King's army into the west, he fell sick of a malignant fever at Salisbury, and was brought dangerously ill to my father's, at Broad Chalk, where he was lodged secretly in a garret. There came a sparrow to the chamber-window, which pecked the lead of a certain panel only, and only one side of the lead of the lozenge, and made only one small hole in it. He continued this pecking and biting the lead during the whole time of his sickness (which was not less than a month). When the major went away, the sparrow desisted, and came thither no more. Two of the servants that attended the major declared this for a certainty."

This prophetic character of the sparrow is alluded to by Chester ("Love's Martyr," p. 122) as follows:—

"The unsatiate sparrow doth prognosticate,
And is held good for divination,
For flying here and there, from gate to gate,
Foretells true things by animadvertion:
A flight of sparrows flying in the day
Did prophesie the fall and sacke of Troy."

5. Mr. Ralston ("Russian Folk Tales," p. 331), gives two curious legends connected with the sparrow. The first runs as follows:—

"When the Jews were seeking for Christ in the garden, all the birds, except the sparrow, tried to draw them away from His hiding-place. Only the sparrow attracted them thither by its shrill chirruping. Then the Lord cursed the sparrow, and forbade that men should eat its flesh."

The second tells us that before the Crucifixion the swallows carried off the

nails provided for the use of the executioners, but the sparrows brought them back. And while our Lord was hanging on the cross the sparrows were maliciously exclaiming "Jif! Jif!" *i.e.* "He is living! He is living!" in order to urge on the tormentors to fresh cruelties. But the swallows cried, with opposite intent, "Umer! Umer!" *i.e.* "He is dead! He is dead!" Therefore it is that to kill a swallow is a sin, and that its nest brings good luck to a house. But the sparrow is an unwelcome guest, whose entry into a cottage is a presage of woe. As a punishment for its sins its legs have been fastened together by invisible bonds, and therefore it always hops, not being able to run.

7. Bohemian charms to keep sparrows from the crops.

*a.* Stick upright in a field a splinter cut from a piece of timber out of which a coffin has been made.

*b.* Lay a bone taken from a grave on the threshold or window-sill of your barn.

*c.* If, while sowing, you put three grains of corn under your tongue, wait till you have reached the end of the furrow in silence, and then spit them out "in the Name, etc.," no sparrow will come into your field, though your neighbour's may be full of them.

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*Genus* FRINGILLA.

## CHAFFINCH (*Fringilla cœlebs*).

So called from a supposed fondness for chaff.

1. From its reiterated monotonous call-note it receives the names

Pink.
Spink (North; Midland; Eastern counties).
Pink twink (Devon; Somerset; Salop).
Pinkety (Northants).
Sheely (do.)
Shilfa, or Sheelfa (North; Scotland).
Chink chaffey (Hants).
Chink chink (Salop).

Cf. *Quinquin* (Normandy); *Pint* (Brittany); *Finty* (Hungary).

2. From the variegated hues of its plumage it is called

Pea, Pied or Pine, finch (Midlands; Salop).
Shell apple.

Shell or Sheld = variegated or spotted. Cf. "Sheldrake," which see. Apple = Alpe (see Bulfinch).

3. From the white bands on its wings.

Whitewing.
White finch.

4. Various names.

Copper finch (Devon ; Cornwall).

From the chesnut colour of its breast.

Chaffie (Aberdeen).
Daffinch (North Devon). ? *i.q.* Chaffinch.
Apple bird (Cornwall).
Horse finch.
Buck finch.
Bullspink (Craven ; Teesdale).
Bully (North Riding).
Scobby (North).
Roberd, or Robinet.

A familiar name.

Boldie (Aberdeen).
Snabby (Kirkcudbright).
Maze finch (Cornwall).
Charbob (Derbyshire).
Beech finch.

From its partiality to beech nuts.

Brisk finch.

Briskie, Brichtie (Kirkcudbright).

From its smart, lively activity : hence "Gai comme un pinson."

Wheatsel bird (Norfolk).

Applied to the male chaffinch, says Mr. Gurney, perhaps from their congregating together in autumn about the season of wheat sowing.

Wet bird (Rutland ; Stirling).

Because its cry, "weet, weet," is considered to foretell rain. Hence in Scotland, when the children hear it, they say

"Weet-weet ! (the cry)
Dreep-dreep !" (the consequence.)
(Chambers).

The name Cœlebs, or Bachelor, was bestowed upon the species by Linnæus, because he noticed that the females migrated from Sweden southward in the autumn, while the males did not : hence the title, in reference to their "celibate" state.

5. Song of the chaffinch.

This bird is highly esteemed in Germany for its musical powers, and extravagant prices are given for first-class performers. As an instance may be cited the fact that a workman at Ruhla, in Thuringia, in the excess of his admiration for a good bird, gave a cow in exchange for it—hence the proverb current in the Harz,—"This chaffinch is worth a cow." Bechstein gives the titles of some of their most admired songs : *e.g.*, The Double Trill of the Harz, The Reiterzong or Rider's Song, The Wine Song, The Bridegroom's Song, The

Double Trill, The Gutjahr, or Good Year Song, The Quakia Song, The Pithia. The Wine Song runs thus—"Fritz, Fritz, Fritz, willst du mit mir zum Weine gehen?" (*i.e.* 'Fritz, Fritz, Fritz, wilt thou to wine with me?') The Bridegroom's Song is thought to represent the following—"Fink, fink, fink, fink, hoïst du? willst du nicht den Braütigam zieren?" (*i.e.* 'Finch, finch, finch, finch, dost thou hear? wilt thou not play the bridegroom?') The Double Trill is considered the most perfect, and may be thus expressed—"Finkferlinkfinkfink, zischesia, harvelalalalaziscutschia."

In France different interpretations, according to M. Rolland, are given to the song of the chaffinch. In the neighbourhood of Orleans it is supposed to say "Je suis le fils d'un riche prieur" (hence the name of *Riche prieur* has been applied to it). In Normandy it cries "Qui est ce qui veut venir à Saint Symphorien?" In the Saintonge the chaffinch asks for "In pllein, pllein, pllein, p'tit plât de roûtie" (*i.e.* a piece of bread soaked in wine). In Lorraine it says—

"Fi, fi! les laboureux,
J'virrons ben sans eux!"

About Paris the song represents—"Oui, Oui, Oui, Oui, je suis un bon citoyen."

## BRAMBLING (*Fringilla montifringilla*).

Also called

Bramble finch, or Mountain finch.
Furze chirper, or Furze chucker.
Cock o' the north (East and South Scotland).

From the rich colours and beautiful markings of its plumage.

Kate (Kent).

Cf. the Walloon name of the bird, *Kaikeù*.

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*Genus* LINOTA.

## LINNET (*Linota cannabina*).

1. The linnet (so called from its partiality for the seed of flax, *linum*), varies in its plumage considerably at different seasons of the year: hence the names—

*a.* Grey linnet (England generally; South Scotland).
Grey: or Grey bird (Westmoreland; North of Ireland).

From its dull colouring in winter.

*b.* Red linnet (Hants; West Riding).
Greater redpole.
Blood linnet (Norfolk).
Rose linnet.
Red-breasted linnet.

From the rich crimson breast and chesnut brown back it bears in summer.

*c.* Lemon bird (West Riding).

A name given to those male linnets in the breeding season which have a yellowish hue on the breast.

*d.* Brown linnet.

Applied to males and females in the winter season.

2. From its frequenting downs and open moors abounding in furze or whin, it is called—

Gorse bird (Salop).
Gorse hatcher (Salop)
Gorse thatcher (do.)
Whin linnet (Stirling).
Gorse linnet (Northants).
Whin grey (North of Ireland).
Furze linnet (Oxon).

3. Various names.

Linnet finch.
Lint-white (Orkney Isles). A.-S. *Linet-wige—i.e.* Flax-hopper.
Lintie (Scotland).
Heather lintie (Scotland).
Lennert (North country).

4. The linnet and the eagle.

"According to the Ojibway legend, the birds met together one day to try which could fly the highest. Some flew up very swiftly, but soon got tired, and were passed by others of stronger wings. But the eagle went up above them all, and was ready to claim the victory, when the grey linnet, a very small bird, flew from the eagle's back, where it had perched unperceived, and being fresh and unexhausted, succeeded in going the highest. When the birds came down and met in council to award the prize, it was given to the eagle, because that bird had not only gone up nearer to the sun than any of the larger birds, but it had carried the linnet on its back. For this reason the eagle's feathers became the most honourable marks of distinction a warrior could bear." ("Algic Researches," ii. 216.) The above is almost identical with the well-known tale in which the wren plays the part here allotted to the linnet. (See under "Wren," ii. 1, p. 36.)

## LESSER REDPOLL (*Linota rufescens*).

1. So called from its rose-red crown, from which (and from its breast of the same colour) are given the names—

Rose lintie (Lowlands).
Red linnet (West Riding).
Red-headed finch.

2. Various names.

Chevy linnet (West Riding).
Chippet linnet.
French linnet.

### TWITE (*Linota flavirostris*).

1. So named from its peculiar call note; whence also

Twite finch (North Riding).

2. From hill sides and mountain pastures being its favourite haunt, it is called Mountain linnet, also

Rock lintie.
Rockie (Forfar).
Hill lintie (Orkney Isles).

3. Various names.

Heather lintie (Borders; Shetland and Orkney Isles).

Because the nest is made on the ground, either among short tussocky grass or in the heather.

Lintie (Orkney Isles).
Grey linnet.

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*Sub-family* LOXIINÆ.

*Genus* PYRRHULA.

### BULLFINCH (*Pyrrhula Europæa*).

1. So called from its large head and thick compact shape.

Cf. *Bouvreuil, Bouvier, Bœuf* (France). So Bullhead, Bulldog.

2. From Alp, the old name for the bird used in Ray's time, the following seem to be derived :—

Hoop, or Hope (Somerset; Cornwall; Devon; Dorset).
Olf (East Suffolk).
Nope (Stafford; Salop).
Mwope (Dorset).
Mawp (Lancashire).
Pope (Dorset).

Hope and Mwope are identical, as also Pope. In the latter case the P and M are transferred, as in Patty, Matty.

3. The cheeks, neck, breast and sides of the *male* bird are red, hence—

Red hoop (Dorset).
Blood olp (Surrey; Norfolk).

4. The same parts in the *female* are reddish-brown; hence—

Tawny (Somerset).
Tony hoop, or Tonnihood (Somerset).

5. The crown of the head is a lustrous black, from which are derived the names—

Black cap (Lincoln).
Billy black cap; Black nob (Salop).
Monk.

Cf. *Prêtre* (France); *Monachino* (Italy); *Dompfaff* (Germany); *Frailecillo* (Spain).

Coal hood (Devon; Somerset).

6. Various names.

Plum bird, or Plum budder (Salop).
Bud bird, Bud finch, or Bud picker (Devon).

From its partiality to the buds of fruit trees.

Cf. *Ebourgeonneur* (Savoy); *Casse boutons* (Anjou).

Thick bill (Lancashire).

Cf. *Perroquet de France* (France).

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*Genus* Loxia.

## CROSSBILL (*Loxia curvirostra*).

1. Called by Willoughby, "Shell apple": thus explained by Carew, in his "Survey of Cornwall," 1602 (p. 73):—

"Not long since, there came a flock of birds into Cornwall, about harvest season, in bigness not much exceeding a sparrow, which made a foul spoil of the apples: their bills were thwarted crosswise at the end, and with these they would cut an apple in two at one snap, eating only the kernels."

But see, for probable derivation, under Chaffinch, 2.

2. Folk lore.

The old legend of the crossbill and the crucified Saviour, so beautifully versified by Longfellow, is well known; but there is a quaint Latin poem, quoted by Professor Newton, in *Notes and Queries*, Ser. V., vol. vii., p. 505

which may be worth transcribing. It contains many curious particulars respecting the bird. The poem is to be found in Schwenckfeld's "Theriotropheum Silesiæ" (Lignicii, 1603). pp. 253, 254, and is prefaced thus :—

"De hâc (sc. Curvirostra sive Loxiâ) egregium extat elegiacum carmen D.D. Johannis Majoris poetæ celeberrimi :—

"Obvia Naturæ rerum vestigia mentis
Certe suæ impressit conditor ipse Deus.
Inque feris quæ mente carent, et moribus harum,
Quæ fugienda homini, quæque sequenda monet.
Est avibus pietas inter se, est gratia quædam,
Et suus in Dominos est amor atque fides.
Id docet exemplo volucris pia et advena quædam,
Christiferæ gestans æmula rostra Crucis :
Tempore natalis Christi parit : inde triumphi
Tempore per sylvas agmina vesca volant.
Cum reliquæ indulgent ovis, hæc usibus apta est,
Nec nulla in cantu gratia inesse solet.
Fert etiam imperia, atque agnoscit herilia jussa,
Et cavet infantes ne mala Luna premat.
Orta sagax noctu increpitat vulcania damna,
Matribus et fœtus non sinit esse graves.
Fama est, has rostris tentasse revellere clavos,
In cruce pendentem qui tenuere Deum.
Si qua Crucis Christi stat imago lignea tectis,
Insidunt, clavos et ruere ore parant.
Fama pium affectum notat, et qua novimus illas
Præ reliquis avibus laude vigere, fidem.
Vix uno servata die duo nominis hujus
Forte mihi ex caveâ plumea turba volat.
Itque reditque viam in sylvas, rursumque frequentat
Tecta, suum plenus dum facit annus iter.
Ergo me cantus monet, et pietatis imago
In cruce, quo Christi sim memor ipse Crucis.
Æquo animo perferre Crucem, et dare præmia laudum,
Par est, quos salvos Crux tua, Christe, facit."

Here, it will be observed, we are told of the crossbill that (l. 9) it hatches its eggs at Christmas, and (ll. 9, 10) that the young birds fly in full plumage at Easter : that (13) it obeys its master's orders, and (14) awakens children sleeping in the baleful moonshine. It also warns the household (15) against outbreaks of fire, and watches over the mistress (16) in childbirth. Then follows the old Cross legend.

In Thuringia these birds, called Winter-, Christ-, and Cross-birds, are very generally kept in captivity, because the peasants believe that they can take on themselves any diseases to which men are subject. A bird whose upper mandible bends to the right can transfer colds and rheumatism from man to itself ; if the mandible bends to the left, it will render the same service to women. The water left by the bird is drunk as a specific against epilepsy ; its corpse is believed to be preserved by nature from decay. (For the superstitions in Lower Austria connected with the crossbill, see Blaas, in "Germania," 1875, p. 352.)

*Sub-family* EMBERIZINÆ.

*Genus* EMBERIZA.

## CORN BUNTING (*Emberiza miliaria*).

Called Corn bird in Ireland, because it is constantly found in cornfields during spring and summer.

1. In colour and habits this bird resembles the skylark; hence

Bunting or Buntling lark (Scotland).
Bunt lark (Norfolk).
Horse lark (Cornwall).
Lark bunting (Somerset).
Bush lark (Ireland).

Cf. *Alouette de pré, Verdière de pré* (Jura).

2. Also called

Common bunting.
Ebb.
Sparrow (Hebrides).
Hornbill bunting (Ireland).
Briar bunting (North of Ireland).

From its nesting in ditch banks run wild with brambles.

Thistle cock (Orkney Isles).
Skitter brottie (do.).

Perhaps from its resorting to corn stacks in winter. *Skite*=to void excrement; *brathies*=the cross ropes of the roof of a stack.

## YELLOW AMMER (*Emberiza citrinella*).

1. So called from the bright yellow of its head, neck, breast, and lower parts (*Ammer* answering to A.-S. *Amore*=a small bird; akin to Germ. *Ammer*, a bunting), whence also the names

Yellow amber or Yellow omber (Salop).
Yellow bunting.
Yellow yowley or Yolling (Scotland; North of Ireland).

Yowley, from A.-S. *geolu*=yellow, whence also the Norfolk name, Guler.

Yellow yeldrin (Scotland).
Yellow yoldrin (West Riding).
Yeorling (Berwick).
Yellow yite (Scotland).
Yeldrock (Northumberland).
Gold spink (North).
Gold finch (Salop).

Goldie (Notts ; Craven ; North Riding).
Gladdie (Devon ; Cornwall). From A.-S. *gladde*=bright.
Blakeling (Northumberland). From A.-S. *blaec*.
Bessie blakeling (Westmoreland).

The Gaelic name is *Buidheag-Bhearaidh*, *i.e.* yellow broom bird.

2. From its peculiarly plaintive note it is called

Little-bread-and-no-cheese (Devon).
Bread-and-cheese (Salop).
Cheeser (Northants).
Pretty, pretty *creature* (Gloucestershire).
De'il, de'il, de'il tak' you (Scotland).

Hence the following rhyme, which Scotch boys give in imitation of its note:—

"Whetil te, whetil te, whee!
Harry my nest, and the de'il tak' ye!"

The Germans say that its note runs, "'Sis, 'sis, 'sis, 'sis! viel zu früh," *i.e.* "'Tis, 'tis, 'tis, 'tis much too early."

3. From the curious irregular lines on the egg, resembling writing,

Writing master (Salop).

Cf. *Écrivain* (Brittany); *Schryver* (Brabant).

Scribbling or writing lark (Northants).

So Clare writes—

"Five eggs, pen scribbled o'er with ink their shells,
Resembling writing-scrolls, which Fancy reads
As Nature's poesy and pastoral spells—
They are the yellow hammer's, and she dwells
Most poet like, 'mid brooks and flowery weeds."

These eggs are said in Scotland to be "gouted with the taint of the de'il's blood." *Vide inf.* 5.

4. Various names.

Skite (Aberdeen). See "skitter brottie," under Corn Bunting, 2.
Blacksmith (Salop). See under Stonechat, 2.
Coldfinch (Salop).
Bessie (Lancashire).

5. Folk lore.

Chambers says that this bird (called Devil's bird in the north of Scotland) is the subject of an unaccountable superstition on the part of the peasantry,

who believe that it drinks a drop, some say three drops, of the devil's blood each May morning—some say each Monday morning. Its nest, therefore, receives less mercy than that of almost any other bird. Its somewhat extraordinary appearance, all of one colour, and that an unusual one in birds, is the only imaginable cause of the antipathy with which it is regarded. The boys of our own northern region, who call it the yellow yorling or yellow yite, address it in the following rhyme of reproach:—

"Half a paddock, half a toad,
Half a yellow yorling:
Drinks a drap o' the de'il's bluid
Every May morning."

Scotch children also hang by the neck all the yellow ammers they can get hold of. They often take the bare "gorbals," or unfledged young, of this bird, and suspend them by a thread tied round the neck to one end of a crossbeam, which has a small stone hung from the other. They then suddenly strike down the stone end and drive the poor bird into the air. This operation they call "spangie-hewit." "Hewit," says Jamieson, *sub* "Yeldring," seems derived from A.-S. *heafod*, the head. "Spang" is to fly off with elasticity; (?) to make the head spring or fly off.

We find from Grohmann ("Aberglauben aus Bohmen," p. 73) that the same ill-feeling is shown to the yellow ammer in the neighbourhood of Prague. He says, "It is believed that the golden ammer procures three drops of the devil's blood on the 1st of May, for which reason it is persecuted by the peasantry."

In Thuringia the phrase "Sichelchen, sichelchen, schnied" ('Sickle, sickle, cut!') is applied to it, because it sings just before harvest.

## CIRL BUNTING (*Emberiza cirlus*).

Cirl, *i.e.* Cheeper, is akin to the German, *Zirlammer*. Cf. the Dutch *kirren*, to coo, and the French term *Sirron* (Alpes Maritimes), also Italian *zirlare*, to chirp.

Called in Devonshire French Yellow ammer, where the word "French" seems used in the sense of "foreign," hence "uncommon" or "rare."

## REED BUNTING (*Emberiza schœniclus*).

1. So called from its frequenting reeds and sedge; whence also

Reed sparrow (Notts).

Cf. *Moineau des joncs* (France).

Water sparrow (Salop).

Cf. *Moineau d'eau* (France).

2. From its collar of white feathers it has received the names

Ring bird.
Ring bunting.
Ring fowl (Aberdeen).

3. Called from its black head

Black-headed bunting.
Black bonnet.

Coaly hood (Scotland generally).
Black coaly-hood (South Scotland).
Colin blackhead (Renfrew).

Black cap (Craven; Hants—in which county the female is called Spear sparrow).

4. Various names.

Chink (Scotland).

From the sound of its note.

Toad snatcher.

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*Genus* PLECTROPHANES.

## SNOW BUNTING (*Plectrophanes nivalis*).

1. This bird is known by many names, owing to the manner in which its plumage is coloured, according to the time of the year or the age of the individual.

In winter it has the names of

Snow bird (North England; South Scotland).

Equivalent to the Gaelic *San-ant sneachd*, and *Bruant des neiges* (France); *Sneeuvink* (Holland).

Snaw fowl (Shetland Isles).
Snow flake (Scotland; Orkney Isles).
Snow flight.
White lark, or White-winged lark (Norfolk).

The young males in summer, and the females, are called

Tawny buntings.
Mountain buntings.
Pied finches.

2. Various names.

Oatfowl (Orkney Isles).

From its feeding on the oats.

North cock (Aberdeen).
Brambling.

A name given to the young birds.

*Section* OSCINES CULTIROSTRES.

*Family* STURNIDÆ.

*Genus* STURNUS.

## STARLING (*Sturnus vulgaris*).

1. Starling is the diminutive of "stare," A.-S. *Staer*: hence

Stare (Ireland; West Cornwall; Dorset; North Riding).
Starnel (Northants).
Starn (Shetland Isles).
Staynil.
Gyp starnill (North Riding).
Black starling (East Lothian).

2. From its habit of perching on the backs of sheep to feed on the ticks, it is called

Shepster, or Chepster (North; Cheshire).
Shepstarling, or Shepstare (Craven).
Sheeprack (Northants).

3. Various names.

Solitary thrush.

Young starlings used to be so called, from their greyish-brown plumage; hence is given to them in East Lothian the name of Grey starlings.

Gyp (North Riding).
Jacob.

4. "The Hebridean shooters," says Macgillivray, "always twist off a starling's neck, the moment they get hold of it, alleging that in the blood of that part there is something of a poisonous nature."

5. Proverbial saying.

"'Thou art a bitter bird,' said the raven to the starling."

Equivalent to "the pot calling the kettle black."

6. Weather lore.

When starlings assemble in flocks, it is a sign of impending cold weather; they do so to collect food (Haute Bretagne).

*Family* CORVIDÆ.

*Genus* PYRRHOCORAX.

## CHOUGH (*Pyrrhocorax graculus*).

A.-S. *Ceo*, from the cawing noise it makes.

1. From its haunts being on the cliffs of the Cornish coast it has received the names of

Cornish daw, or Cornish Jack.
Cornwall kae.
Market Jew crow.

From its frequenting the neighbourhood of Marazion.

2. Also called

Red legged crow
Killigrew.

Cf. *Cahouette* (Guernsey).

Chauk, or Chauk-daw.

From its cry. Cf. *Chocard* (France).

Daw.
Hermit crow.

From its solitary habits.

Cliff daw.
Sea crow (Ireland).

3. The lines in *King Lear*,

> "The crows and choughs that wing the midway air,
> Show scarce so gross as beetles,"

seem to refer to the jackdaw, as the chough has not been observed in Kent, though it may once have frequented Dover cliffs. Besides, when Shakespeare speaks of "russet-pated choughs" (*Midsummer Night's Dream*, iii. 2), he evidently alludes to the same bird, as the head of the chough is quite black.

4. King Arthur in the form of a chough.

In "Don Quixote," Book II., chap. v., reference is made to a belief that "King Arthur, whom, in our Castilian tongue, we always call King Artus, did not die, but was turned into a *raven*, and that, in process of time, he would be restored to life and recover his kingdom; for which reason it cannot be proved that, from that time to this, any Englishman has killed a raven." There is no doubt that the bird referred to here is not the raven, but the chough, mentioned by Mr. Hawker in his "Echoes from Old Cornwall,"—

> "And mark yon bird of sable wing,
> Talons and beak all red with blood,
> The spirit of the long-lost king
> Passed in that shape from Camlan's flood."

5. It was an old belief in Cornwall, according to Camden, that the chough was an incendiary, "and thievish besides; for oftentimes it secretly conveieth fire sticks, setting their houses a fire, and as closely filcheth and hideth little pieces of money" ("Britain," p. 189).

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*Genus* GARRULUS.

**JAY** (*Garrulus glandarius*).

1. This bird appears to derive its name from the French *geai*; which, again, is another form of the old French *gai* = speckled or pied. In Italian, *Pelle gaietta* means a skin of many colours.

Gae (Scotland).
Jay pie (Cornwall; Devon; Midlands).
Jay piet (Perth).
Blue jay (Linlithgow).
Jenny jay (North Riding).

2. From its jarring note it is called

Kae (Roxburgh).

In Gaelic *Screachag choille, i.e.* Screamer of the wood.

3. The Latin epithet of *glandarius* is applied to it on account of its fondness for acorns, which it swallows whole.

4. Folk lore.

The common people in France think that the jay is subject to the falling sickness—which, however, does not prevent them from eating him when they find him on the ground. In Haute Bretagne it is believed that the jays which build in oak trees cannot be tamed, as they are peculiarly liable to that malady.

In the jay's nest, so they say in Tyrol, are found magical stones, the possessor of which can make himself invisible. The existence of these stones is the reason why the nests of this bird are so seldom found. ("Zeitsch. f. D. M." i. 236.)

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*Genus* PICA.

**MAGPIE** (*Pica rustica*)—*i.e.* "Magot (Margot) pie."

1. (*a*) From the Latin *pica* are derived the names

Pie.
Piet (Westmoreland).
Pianate, or Pyenate (West Riding).

(*b*) Familiar names.

Mag, or Madge.
Marget, or Margaret.
Miggy (North country).
Nanpie (Craven).
Ninut (Notts).
Pye mag (Hundred of Lonsdale).
Pie nanny do.

Cf. *Margot* (France); *Jacques* (Burgundy); *Jaquette* (Savoy); *Bertha* (North Italy).

(*c*) Various names.

Hagister (Kent).

From O. H. G. *Agalstra.* So *Agasse* (France); *Gazza* (Italy) = chatterer.

Chatterpie (Norfolk).
Cornish pheasant (Cornwall).

From their abundance in that county.

## 2. Weather lore.

The craftiness and wisdom of the magpie is supposed by the countrypeople in the south of France to foresee storm and tempest. Hence, if these birds build their nests on the summits of trees a calm season may be expected, according to the saying—

"Quond los ogassos nison plo haout suls aoubres, ocono marquo que l'estion sero pas ourogeous" (*i.e.* "Quand les pies nichent très-haut sur les arbres, cela annonce que l'été ne sera pas orageux").

But if the nests are placed lower down, so as not to be so much exposed to the storm, winds and tempests are sure to follow: hence the proverb,

"Gran bèn te mancara pas
Se' l'agasso a nisat bas."

The Normans believe that the magpie begins to build and also lays her eggs at certain fixed seasons, *e.g.*—

"A la mi-quèreme
Les pies sont au quêne,
A Pâques flieurie
L'œu est sous la pie,
Aux Rogations
Les pitiaux s'en vont."

## 3. Folk lore of the magpie.

The magpie is almost universally considered to be a bird of evil omen. In Germany and the North witches often transform themselves into its shape, or use it as their steed. In Sweden it is believed that when sorcerers, on Walpurgis night, ride to the Blaculla, they turn into magpies; so when in August the birds moult and lose their neck feathers, the countrypeople account for it by saying, "De hava varet till Blakulla, och hjelpt hin onde föra in sitt hö, da fjœdrarna af oket blivit nötte af deras halsar,"—*i.e.*, 'the magpies have gone to the Blakulla and have helped the devil to carry his hay, so their feathers have

been rubbed off by the yoke.' The same superstition prevails in the south of France, with the exception that the Sabbat is considered to be held on the Feast of the Transfiguration. In Scotland, according to Gregor ("Animal Superstitions in the North-East of Scotland"), the magpie was sometimes called "the devil's bird," and was believed to have a drop of the devil's blood in its tongue. (Cf. Yellow Ammer, 5.) It could also receive the gift of speech if its tongue were scratched and a drop of blood from the human tongue inserted. The Bretons equally detest it, and declare that on its head grow seven of the devil's hairs. Hence it is considered unlucky in some places to kill one,—*e.g.*, in Sweden and North Germany, where the twelve days between Christmas and Epiphany is the only season during which it can be shot with impunity. In Thuringia the month of March is the time for their destruction; should this rule be broken, great trouble awaits the transgressor. The country-folk in Oldenburg consider the magpie to be so imbued with Satanic principles that if a cross be cut on the tree in which the bird has built, she will forsake her nest at once. There are several reasons given for her bad reputation in the north of England, of which two or three are subjoined.

(*a*) "Because she was the only bird that would not go into the ark with Noah and his folk. She liked better to perch on the roof and jabber over the drowning world. So ever after that, when a magpie flies away, turn back, or look to meet ill luck." (From C. Reade's "Put Yourself in his Place," p. 171.) See below.

(*b*) "Because it is a hybrid between the raven and the dove, and therefore, unlike every other bird and beast, had not been baptised in the waters of the Deluge."—Durham. (From Henderson's "Folk Lore of the North of England," p. 126.)

(*c*) Because, after the crucifixion, she did not, like the other birds, go into full mourning. Therefore her punishment is, that, before she can lay an egg, she must suspend herself from a branch nine times.

(*d*) For another reason, see under Swallow, II. 5 *c*. The following legend accounts for the dislike the Bretons have for the magpie. "After the battle of St. Aubin du Cormier, Anne Duchess of Brittany, the last sovereign of that country, was betrayed to her enemies the English by the magpies, who, when she was concealed in the carcase of a horse, pecked holes in the hide and disclosed her place of concealment. As a punishment God expelled them for ever from the forest of Gavre." (Desaivre, "Etudes de la Mythologie locale," p. 12.) When a magpie shrieks near a dwelling, say the South Germans, it is a sure token that the harmony of the household will be disturbed during the day, or else that an unwelcome guest will arrive; but if the noise it makes be only a lively chatter it is announcing the advent of a friend.

The appearance of a magpie is, according to popular belief, something of mysterious import. The following verse is in general use in the North:

"One is sorrow, two is mirth,
Three a wedding, four a birth,
(Three a berrin', four a wedding—Northants).
Five heaven, six hell,
Seven the deil's ain sell."

Mr. Henderson quotes another rendering of the last couplet—

"Five a sickening, six a christening,
Seven a dance, eight a lady going to France."

In Lancashire it runs—

"Five for rich, six for poor,
Seven for a witch, I can tell you no more!"

And one more version—

"Five for a fiddle, six for a dance,
Seven for England, eight for France."

Mr. Denham gives some rhymes as current in Northumberland which vary slightly from the above, viz. :—

"One sorrow, two mirth,
Three a wedding, four a birth ;
Five for silver, (or rich,)
Six for gold, (or poor,)
Seven for a secret, not to be told ;
Eight for heaven, nine for hell,
And ten for the devil's ain sel'."

Grose, in his "Popular Superstitions," says that "it is unlucky to see first one magpie, then more ; but to see two denotes marriage or merriment ; three, a successful journey ; four, an unexpected piece of good news ; five, you will shortly be in a great company." Wordsworth alludes to this in "The Excursion":—

". . . rather would I constantly incline
To the traditionary sympathies
Of a most rustic ignorance, and take
A fearful apprehension from the owl,
Or death watch : and *as readily rejoice*
*If two auspicious magpies crossed my way.*"

On the above superstition Sir Humphrey Davy, in "Salmonia," writes as follows :—"For anglers in spring it is always unlucky to see single magpies ; but two may always be regarded as a favourable omen ; and the reason is, that in cold and stormy weather one magpie alone leaves the nest in search of food, the other remaining sitting upon the eggs or the young ones ; but when two go out together, it is only when the weather is mild and warm, and favourable for fishing." To avert the ill-luck caused by the appearance of a single magpie, various practices are used in different localities. Thus, for instance, Mr. Henderson tells us that in the north of England the desired end is gained by making a cross in the air, or by taking off the hat and making a polite bow. This latter habit prevails generally throughout England. In the High Peak it is the custom to cross oneself, in the West Riding to cross the thumbs in addition, repeating at the same time the lines,

"I cross the magpie,
The magpie crosses me :
Bad luck to the magpie,
And good luck to me."

Others cross the feet, or look round for a crow, as the sight of that bird neutralises the evil of the magpie's presence. In Devonshire, says Mr. Dyer, the peasant spits over his right shoulder three times, repeating the following words,

"Clean birds by sevens,
Unclean by twos :
The dove, in the heavens,
Is the one I choose."

"A North Shropshire friend takes off his hat, spits in the direction of the bird or birds, and says, 'Devil, devil, I defy thee.' Our Condover authority says : 'If you see a magpie going in the contrary direction to the sun, take something and throw at him, saying, "Bad luck to the bird that goes widdershins," or it will be bad luck to you.'" ("Shropshire Folk-Lore," 223.)

According to Mr. Farmer, in the "Magazine of Natural History," "the nurse was often heard to declare that she had lost all hopes of her charge when she had observed a piannet on the housetop." This idea is prevalent in Scotland, also in Switzerland. But in West Sussex the perching of a magpie on the

roof of a house is regarded as a good sign—a proof of the house being in no danger of falling—and the countrypeople of that district are firmly persuaded that a tree with a magpie's nest in it is safe from tempests, and will never be uprooted by the storm. The dread of the magpie, and the aversion with which it is regarded generally throughout Europe, do not prevail in Norway; where, according to a writer in the "Zoologist" (vol. viii., 3085), "this bird, usually so shy in this country, and so difficult to approach within gunshot, seems to have entirely changed its nature. It is there the most domestic and fearless bird. Its nest is invariably placed in a small tree or bush adjoining some farm or cottage, and not unfrequently in the very midst of some straggling village. If there happens to be a suitable tree by the roadside, and near a house, it is a very favourable locality for a Norwegian magpie's nest. I have often wondered to see the confidence and fearlessness displayed by this bird in Norway. He will only just move out of your horse's way as you drive by him on the road; and should he be perched on a rail by the roadside, he will only stare at you as you rattle by, but never thinks of moving off. It is very pleasant to see this absence of fear of man in Norwegian birds. A Norwegian would never think of terrifying a bird for the sake of sport; whilst, I fear, to see such a bird as the magpie sitting quietly on a rail within a few feet would be to an English boy a temptation for assault which he could not resist. I must add, however, with regard to magpies, that there is a superstitious prejudice for them current throughout Norway. They are considered harbingers of good luck,* and are consequently always invited to preside over the house; and when they have taken up their abode in the nearest tree, are defended from all ill: and he who should maltreat the magpie has perhaps driven off the *genius loci*, and so may expect the most furious anger of the neighbouring dwelling, whose good fortune he has thus violently dispersed." M. Gubernatis (ii. 259) thinks that these contradictory characters are represented in the magpie (as in the swallow—see below), by its colours of white and black: moreover, that in popular fiction the bird's great knowledge is used now to do evil, as a malignant fairy, now to do good to men, as a benignant fairy. Wolff ("Beiträge zur Deutsche Mythologie," ii. 429) gives as an instance of the latter the following legend. "Once upon a time the pious Richardis von Ebersberg was on her way to church, when she heard the bells already chiming for service. In her hurry and agitation (for she had some distance yet to go) she dropped her glove, which was immediately picked up by a magpie, who went off with it. The Holy Mysteries were just about to be celebrated, when in flew the bird and deposited the glove on the altar. Then the priest, recognising it, and perceiving that the countess had not yet arrived, waited for her coming to complete the service." As another illustration of the opposite lights in which the magpie is regarded, may be mentioned the belief in Tyrol that broth in which this bird has been boiled will make him who drinks it crazy. Yet, on the other hand, the pastor of a village near Dresden is reported to have cured several epileptic patients by the same drink! (Busch, pp. 206, 207). In Appenzell corns are called "Aegestanaug" (*i.e.* magpie's eyes); and a certain method of curing them is to repeat the following words in a loud voice whenever you may happen to see a single bird: "Zigi, zigi, Aegest, i ha dreu Auga, ond Du gad zwä, ha, ha!" *i.e.* 'Ha, ha! magpie, I've three eyes, and you've only two!'

The Icelanders declare that this bird is not indigenous in their country, but was introduced by the English; and this, however it may be said of Iceland, is certainly true of Ireland. There the earliest mention of the magpie as indigenous is in Keogh's "Zoologia Medicinalis Hibernica" (Dublin, 8vo, 1739),

* Such is the case in some parts of Shropshire—*e.g.*, Shrewsbury, Edgmond—where people, when they see a magpie, wish, as if it were a bird of good omen. ("Shropshire Folk Lore," 223.)

where the author, as Mr. Thompson tells us (vol. i., p. 328), merely speaks of the "magpie or pianet, *Hib. Maggidipye.*" Derrick, who wrote his "Image of Ireland" in 1581, says:—

> "No pies to pluck the thatch from house
> Are breed in Irishe grounde,
> But worse than pies, the same to burne,
> A thousande maie be founde."

While Smith, in his "History of the County of Cork," published in 1749, remarks "that it was not known in Ireland seventy years ago." See Thompson, *loc. cit.*, and Yarrell, ii., p. 111.

4. The magpie's nest. A difference of opinion seems to prevail as to the estimation in which the bird should be regarded as a builder. The following legends are instances of this;—

*a.* "Once upon a time, when the world was very young, the magpie, by some accident or another, although she was quite as cunning as she is at present, was the only bird that was unable to build a nest. In this perplexity she applied to the other members of the feathered race, who kindly undertook to instruct her. So on a day appointed they assembled for that purpose, and the materials having been collected, the blackbird said, 'Place that stick there,' suiting the action to the word, as she commenced the work. 'Ah!' said the magpie, 'I knew that afore.' The other birds followed with their suggestions, but to every piece of advice the magpie kept saying, 'Ah! I knew that afore.' At length, when the birdal habitation was half finished, the patience of the company was fully exhausted by the pertinacious conceit of the pye, so they all left her, with the united exclamation, 'Well, Mistress Mag, as you seem to know all about it, you may e'en finish the nest yourself.' Their resolution was obdurate and final, and to this day the magpie exhibits the effects of partial instruction by her miserably incomplete abode." (Halliwell's "Popular Rhymes," pp. 168, 169.)

*b.* "As the magpie alone knew the art of building a perfect nest, many of the feathered tribe came to him for instruction, upon which the pie began: 'First of all, my friends, you must lay two sticks across, thus.' 'Aye,' said the crow, 'I thought that was the way to begin.' 'You must then lay a feather on a bit of moss.' 'Certainly,' said the jackdaw, 'I know that must follow.' 'Then place there tow, feathers, sticks, and moss, like this.' 'Yes, doubtless,' cried the starling, 'every one could tell how to do that.' At last, when the magpie had gone half way, finding every bird seemed to know as well as he did what to do, he said, 'Gentlemen, I find you can all build nests, so you need not my instruction.' And away he flew. So to this day none but the magpie can build more than half a nest." ("Birds of Prey," by H. C. Adams, 165, 166.) This appears to be a variation of the Isle of Wight legend respecting the woodpigeon (see *infra*).

Bishop Mant gives an excellent description of the elaborate structure which the magpie erects, with its carefully guarded entrance and artistically furnished dome—

> "For skill
> To build his dwelling few can vie
> In talent with the artful pie:
> On turf-reared platform intermixt,
> With clay and cross-laid sticks betwixt,
> 'Mid hawthorn, fir, or elm tree slung,
> Is piled for the expected young

A soft and neatly woven home:
Above of tangled thorns a dome
Forms a sharp fence the nest about,
To keep all rash intruders out."

5. The magpie, like the woodpecker, swallow, and one or two other birds, is supposed to know a plant which has the property of severing iron and splitting stone or any hard substance by its application. In Franche-Comté the country-people say that when the bird leaves her nest she bars the entrance firmly with thorny twigs. On her return she may be seen to bear a sprig of this plant, called "L'herbe à la reprise" in her bill, with which she touches the prickly barrier, and so gains admittance. The herb may be found in abundance under the magpies' nests. (*Démocratie franc-comtoise*, October 15, 1878.) Others say that if you wish to gain possession of the plant, you must cover the nest closely with steel wire netting. Then the bird will apply the sprig to the wire, which will give way, whereupon she will let the plant fall to the ground.

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*Genus* CORVUS.

## JACKDAW (*Corvus monedula*).

1. The following names have been given to this bird, from its note, which may be represented either by "jack" or "daw":—

Jack (general through England and Scotland).
Daw (do.) (do.)
Caddaw (East Anglia). See below, 4.
Cadder and Caddy (Norfolk).
Carder (Suffolk).
Cawdaw (Suffolk; North country).

Cf. *Chotard* (Anjou).

Kae or Ka (Scotland; Orkney Isles).
Ka Wattie (North Scotland).

Cf. *Kauw* (Holland).

Shakespeare applies the name "chough" to the jackdaw in one instance. See under Chough.

2. Jackdaws as prognosticating rain.

"At Wells," says a contributor to *Notes and Queries*, Ser. III., vol. i., p. 67, "whenever a jackdaw has been seen standing on one of the vanes of the cathedral tower, the citizens have often been heard to say, 'We shall have rain soon'; and to my own knowledge it has always followed within twenty-four hours. The same circumstance has been noticed at Croscombe, near Wells, and at Romsey, Hants." So, too, at Norwich there is an old rhyme—

"When three daws are seen on S. Peter's vane together,
Then we're sure to have bad weather."

3. Folk lore respecting the jackdaw.

The flight of a jackdaw down a chimney is considered in the north of England to portend death to one of the inmates of the house; and in Gloucestershire a solitary jackdaw is believed to be a sign of ill luck.

It has been observed at Raglan Castle that jackdaws, whilst building their nests, never pick up a stick they have once let fall, but always fetch a new one (*Notes and Queries*, Ser. III., vol. xi., p. 416).

The old English poets did not hold the jackdaw in much esteem. Thus in *Henry VI.*, Part I., Act II., sc. iv., Warwick says—

"But in these nice sharp quillets of the law,
Good faith, I am no wiser than a daw,"—

and old Thomas Churchyarde seemed to have the same opinion :—

"No, no, here lies indeed
The bird within the straw,
For each man pleadeth need ;
And he is held a daw,
That gives to such as want,
And thinks himself in luck ;
This makes the world to skant,
And turneth all to wreck."

In the "Interlude of the Four Elements" (1510) we read—

"But he that for a commyn welth bysyly
Studieth and laboryth, and lyveth by Goddes law,
Except he wax riche, men count him but a daw."
(Rep. Percy Society, 1848, vol. xxii.)

In Bohemia it is believed that if jackdaws quarrel among themselves there will be war. Also that no jackdaws dare build at Sazava, being banished from that place by S. Procopius.

4. Proverbial sayings.

"Though he says nothing, he pays it with thinking, like the Welshman's jackdaw."

"She can cackle like a cadowe."

## CARRION CROW (*Corvus corone*).

1. So called from the bird's habit of feeding on the flesh of dead animals ; whence also

Car crow.
Carner or Carener crow (Norfolk).

Cf. *Grolle charnière* (Anjou).

Flesh crow.
Gor crow (Oxon. ; Yorkshire).
Ger crow (Craven). From A.-S. *gor*=filth, carrion.
Ket crow (North country). "Ket"=carrion.
Midden craw. "Midden"=a heap of dung or filth.

2. From the Latin *corvus* are derived

Corbie crow (North country).
Corbie (East Lothian).
Craw (Aberdeen).

3. Various names.

Black-nebb'd craw (Roxburgh).

Black neb (Westmoreland).

From its black bill, as differing from that of the rook, which is covered at the base with a white membrane.

Land daw (Northants).

Crake (North country)

From its hoarse cry.

Hoddy or huddy craw (South Scotland).

Dob or doupe (Westmoreland; North Riding).

Bran.

4. Rhymes on the carrion crow, imitating its cry.

Chambers, in his "Popular Rhymes," gives two of these, the first from Galloway :

"A hoggie dead! a hoggie dead! a hoggie dead!
O where? O where? O where?
Down i'e park! down i'e park! down i'e park!
Is't fat? is't fat? is't fat?
Come try! come try! come try!"

The other is from Tweeddale :

"Sekito says there is a hog dead!
Where? where?
Up the burn! up the burn!
Is't fat? is't fat?
'T's a 'creesh! 't's a 'creesh!"

Another from Pulverbatch (Shropshire):

"All glor, all glor (= fat)!
'Weer is it? weer is it?'—'Down i' the moor, down i' the moor.'
'Shall I come along? shall I come along?'—'Bar burins, bar burins.'"
("Shropshire Folk-Lore," 224.)

The following is an old Suffolk song for a bad singer :—

"There was an old crow
Sat upon a clod:
There's an end of my song,
That's odd."

5. Proverbs.

"As the crow flies :" the shortest way between two places. This saying owes its origin to the rook, which always flies in a direct line from its feeding ground home.

"A gone corbie" = a dead crow. Meaning that it is "all up" with the person referred to.

"Crows are never the whiter for washing themselves."

"No carrion will kill a crow."

"The crow thinks her own bird fairest."

"Crows bewail the dead sheep and then eat them."

"If the master say the crow is white the servant must not say 'tis black."

"It's ill killing a crow with an empty sling."

"Like crow, like egg,"—*i.q.* "Ex malo corvo malum ovum."

"Measure is a merry mean, as this doth show:
Not too high for the pye nor too low for the crow."

"Shoot at a pigeon and kill a crow."

"The blind man sometimes hits a crow."

So Heywood in his "Dialogue"—

"Ye cast and conjecture this muche like in show,
As the blind man casts his staffe, or shootes the crow."

"'Tis all along with your eyes; the crows might have helped it when you were young."

"When the crow flees her tail follows."

"You look as if you were crow-trodden."

"You look as though you would make the crow a pudding." Equivalent to saying 'You look like a dying man.' See below, βαλλ' ἐς κοράκας.

"A corbie will not pick out another's een." Spoken of those of the same profession, who will do all they can to support each other.

The crow is considered an emblem of blackness, hence "as black as a crow."

"Lawn as white as driven snow,
Cyprus black as e'er was crow."
*Winter's Tale*, Act IV., sc. iii.

"I have a crow to pluck with you"—*i.e.*, I am vexed with you and must call you to account. I cannot find a satisfactory origin for this saying. It seems to have a connection with the following apologue in John Tzetza, quoted by Gubernatis, "Zoological Mythology," ii., 246. "The crow was about to be elected king of the birds, having arrayed itself in the feathers that had fallen from the other birds, when the owl comes up (in Babrios, instead of the owl it is the swallow that does the same), recognises one of its own feathers and plucks it out, setting thus an example to the other birds, who in a short time despoil the crow entirely."

## 6. Superstitions connected with the crow.

In folk lore the crow always appears as a bird of the worst and most sinister character, representing either death, or night, or winter. Hence in Hungary it is called "the bird of death," while in Sicily, in Germany, and in the old Latin writers, its cawing, especially if heard near a house in which a sick man lay, portended evil. The sight of a crow, especially if it appeared on the left hand of the beholder, was fraught with ill results—*e.g.*

"Sæpe sinistra cava prædixit ab ilice cornix,"

and in the Earl of Northampton's "Defensative against the Poyson of supposed Prophesies" (1583), we read, "The flight of many crowes upon the left side of the campe made the Romans very much afrayde of some badde lucke."

In India the crow "personified," says Gubernatis, "the shadow of a dead man: to give food to the crows is for the Hindoos the same as to give food for the souls of the dead: hence part of their meals was always, and is still, according to all travellers, left for the crows." With this idea is doubtless connected the Greek proverb, βαλλ' ἐς κοράκας, go to the crows, meaning to die.

In German Switzerland it is believed that a crow perching on the roof of a house in which lies a corpse is a sign that the soul of the dead is irrevocably damned. And in Sussex its cry, thrice repeated, is considered a sure token of death. Regarding it, therefore, as a bird of ill luck, the children in Yorkshire and Lancashire cry at its appearance—

"Crow, crow, get out of my sight,
Or else I'll eat thy liver and lights."

And those in the neighbourhood of Lorient—

"Corbeau, corbeau, sauve toi,
Voilà le petit-fils du roi
Qui te coupera le p'tit doigt!
Vinn, vinaigre!"

These birds are popularly supposed to have an instinctive knowledge of the

presence of firearms, and hence to "smell powder." So we find in Cartwright's play of *The Ordinary* (1651):—

*Sir Thomas.* "What, gone? upon my life they did mistrust.
*Meanwell.* They are so beaten that they smell an officer
As crows do powder."

The Bohemian peasants declare that from springtime up to S. Laurence's, or, according to some, S. Bartholomew's day, the crows dare not roost in the forest or on trees, because they were the birds who pecked out the eyes of S. Lawrence, or, as some say, of S. Carlo Borromeo. The children are also told, on the birth of a baby, that it was brought to the house by the crows, who let it fall down the chimney. (Grohmann.)

There was an old belief that the crow and the screech owl eat each other's eggs:—

"Le chat-huant est un oyseau
Plus laid mille fois qu'il n'est beau
Et pour desrober, de nuict veille
Humant les œufs de corneille.
Quand il s'en est remply le ventre
La corneille alors ne sommeille
Et au nid du chat-huant entre
Si bien qu'el' lui rend la pareille."
(Aneau.)

S. Cuthbert is sometimes represented in art with a crow, because, so the story goes, these birds carried away part of the thatch of his hut to build their nests. When he rebuked them, they not only made an apology, but brought him some hog's lard to make amends.

7. The crow stone.

"On the first of April (!), boil the eggs taken out of a crow's nest, until they are hard, and being cold let them be placed in the nest as they were before. When the crow knows this she flies a long way to find the stone, and returns with it to her nest, and the eggs being touched with it, they become fresh and prolific. The stone must be immediately snatched out of the nest. Its virtue is to increase riches, to bestow honours, and foretell future events." ("Mirror of Stones," by Lionardus Camillus.)

## HOODED CROW (*Corvus cornix*).

1. So called from its black head and throat, contrasted with the grey plumage of back and belly, whence

Hoodie, or Hoddie (Perth; Moray).

Cf. *Mantelle* (France).

2. Names given from the colour of the back and under parts.

Dun crow (Craven).
Grey-backed crow (Hants).
Grey crow (Scotland generally).

Cf. *Gorp gris* (South of France).

3. Local names applied from its favourite haunts.

Royston crow (general).
Royston Dick (Midlands).
Kentish crow.

Market Jew crow (Cornwall).

A name also applied to the Chough—which see.

Scremerston crow (Roxburgh).

From the large numbers which frequent the seashore in the neighbourhood of that place.

4. It is supposed that those hooded crows which visit the English coasts in the winter have been driven thither from colder countries, hence they are called

Norway, or Northern crows (Norfolk ; Craven).
Danish crows.
Harry Dutchmen.

5. Various names.

Cawdy mawdy (North country).
Corbie (Perth).
Craa (Shetland Isles).

Where the carrion crow is unknown.

In Ireland it is called

Scald crow ; and
Praheen cark, or the Hen crow
Bunting crow.

From its partiality for chickens and eggs ; and

Carrion crow.

6. Cry of the hooded crow.

"Goiach, Goiach, Gawrach (*i.e.* 'Silly'), says the hoodie, as he sits on a hillock by the wayside and bows at the passengers." See Campbell's "West Highland Tales," i. 275, who relates several stories about this bird, all bearing on its cunning and preternatural wisdom.

7. In allusion to its voracity there is an old saying,

"The gule, the Gordon, and the hoodie craw
Are the three warst things that Moray ever saw.'

Gule is a noxious weed ; and the raids of the Gordon clan were very destructive. Another version of the rhyme substitutes "water craw" (*i.e.* water ouzel), which was believed to be destructive to salmon spawn." ("Zoologist," 1092.)

## ROOK (*Corvus frugilegus*)

(A.-S. *Hroc, i.e.* Croaker: akin to Icel. *Hrokr*; Gael. *Rocas*; Fr. Freux.)

1. Dialectic names from the bird's hoarse cry.

Cra (Westmoreland).
Craw (North Riding ; Lancashire).

Crow is common to rook and carrion crow alike.

2. The rook is well known to be one of the craftiest and most intelligent of birds, while its Latin appellation of *frugilegus* implies its acquisitive nature; hence a "rook" became a term for a wily cheat or sharper, and a rookery denoted at once their place of resort and its crowded character. In some parts of Ireland this bird is so detested (justly or unjustly) by the farmer, that "the curse of the crows" is substituted for "the curse of Cromwell."

3. About June and July, should there be a drought of long duration, rooks suffer terribly, from the burnt-up condition of the ground rendering it almost impossible for them to reach their natural food of worms and grubs; hence the proverb "As hungry as a June crow."

## 4. Weather lore.

When rooks seem to drop in their flight, as if pierced by a shot, it is considered to foretell rain.

"Quand l'agraule passe bas,
Debat l'aile porte lou glas;
Quand passe haut,
Porte lou quant." (Gironde.)
*i.e.* 'Quand le corbeau passe bas,
Sous l'aile il porte la glace;
Quand il passe haut,
Il porte la chaleur.'

"When rooks fly sporting high in air,
It shows that windy storms are near."

If rooks fly to the mountains in dry weather, rain is near. (Isle of Man.)

The Devonshire people say that if rooks stay at home, or return in the middle of the day, it will rain; if they go far abroad it will be fine.

When rooks return to their roosting places in groups, they are said to be "coming home," and rain is expected. (Lancashire.)

It is believed in some parts of Yorkshire that when rooks congregate on the *dead* branches of trees there will be rain before night; if they stand on the *live* branches, the day will be fine.—*Notes and Queries*, Ser. VI., vol. ii., p. 165.

If rooks feed in the streets of a village, it shows that a storm is near at hand. (Durham.)

The following rhyme is common in the north—

"On the first of March
The craws begin to search;
By the first of April
They are sitting still:
By the first o' May
They're a' flown away!
Croupin' greedy back again,
Wi' October's wind and rain."

## 5. Folk-lore of the rook.

It is a common opinion that rooks desert a rookery previous to the downfall of the family to whom it belongs. So Mr. Henderson says (p. 122) that they deserted the rookery of Chipchase, in Northumberland, before the family of Reed left that place. Again, the following paragraph from the *Stamford Mercury* (*Notes and Queries*, Ser. V., vol. ix., p. 506) testifies to the same belief prevailing in Rutlandshire. "A singular circumstance is reported in connection with the recent suicide of Mr. Graves, of Linwood Grange. Near the house

a colony of rooks had established themselves, and, on the day of the funeral, immediately on the appearance of the hearse, the birds left the locality in a body, deserting their nests, all of which contained young. A few only have returned." So too, in Looe, East Cornwall, it is said that rooks forsake an estate if on the death of the proprietor, no heir can be found to succeed him. (See *infra*, under Gulls.)

At Landebia, Canton de Plancoet, Haute Bretagne, exists the belief that the rooks never scratch up nor devour the wheat of that commune, though those in its immediate neighbourhood suffer terribly from their devastations. The reason for this, so the country-people say, is because the widows of Landebia never marry again. (Sebillot, ii. 168).

In Shropshire it is believed that rooks never carry sticks to their nests on Ascension Day, but sit quietly on the trees and do not work; also that if you do not wear something new on Easter Day, they will spoil your clothes.

## RAVEN (*Corvus corax*).

A.-S. *Hrefn*: from its cry.

1. From its hoarse cry the raven, as well as the other Corvidæ, derive their name of *Corvus*; French, *Corbeau*; Spanish, *Cuervo*; Italian, *Corv, Crovo*. So the English and Scotch titles

Croupy Craw (North of England).
Corbie (North of England and Scotland).
Corbie Craw (Scotland).

2. Familiar name.

Ralph.

3. Proverbs respecting the raven.

*a*. The raven said to the rook, "Stand away, black coat!"

A Provençal saying similar to this runs as follows:—

"L'agassa diguèt un jour au courpatas :
Moun Diu, couma siès negra.
L'autre ie respoundeguèt :
E tus aussi n'as de bon rodes."

(*i.e.* 'The magpie said one day to the raven, "My goodness, how black you are!" The raven answered, "Yes, and you have some fine blots on your feathers."')

4. Longevity of ravens.

The raven lives to a great age—so great that the ancients believed the time allotted to it was twenty-seven times that of a man. Another estimate was "Trois hommes l'âge d'un cerf : trois cerfs l'âge d'un corbeau." It will be remembered that Medea's charm, which was intended to restore youth to her father, contained, amongst other ingredients, the beak and head of a raven more than nine hundred years old—

"quibus insuper addit
Ora caputque novem cornicis sæcula passæ.

5. Folk-lore of the raven.

*a*. The raven in Scripture.

In the Book of Genesis we find Noah sending forth a raven to discover whether the waters had abated; and in the Chaldean story of the Deluge, translated by Mr. George Smith, this bird also appears. (See "Transact.

Soc. Bibl. Archæol.," vol. ii., pt. 1, p. 222.) The Korân connects the raven with the murder of Abel: "And God sent a raven which scratched the earth, to show him (Cain) how he should hide the shame of his brother. For he (Cain) not knowing where to conceal it, it stank horribly. And God sent a raven, who killed another raven in his presence, and then dug a pit with his beak and claws, and buried him therein." Some writers have supposed that the word translated "ravens," in the account of the miraculous feeding of the prophet Elijah by those birds, should be rendered "merchants," as understood by S. Jerome and the Arabic version; but this seems hardly probable. (See Canon Rawlinson, in "Speaker's Commentary" in loc., vol. ii., p. 586.) Jewish authors tell strange stories of this bird: that it was originally white, and was turned black for its deceitful conduct (a myth exactly corresponding with the metamorphosis of Coronis by Apollo); also that it flies crooked, and not direct like other birds, because it was cursed by Noah.

*b*. The raven in Northern mythology.

Woden was called *Hrafna-gud*, or the Ravens' God, because he was supposed to have two ravens, Hugin and Munin (Mind and Memory), which he sent over the world to get intelligence: when they returned they sat on his shoulders, and told him all they had seen and heard. Hence the raven was held in high honour by the Norsemen, and its form transferred to their standards, the most famous of which bore the name of *Landeyda—i.e.* "land ravager." "It was said to have been woven and embroidered in one noontide by the daughter of Regner Lodbrok, son of Sigurd, that dauntless warrior who chanted his death song while perishing in a horrible pit filled with deadly serpents. If the Danish arms were destined to defeat, the raven hung his head and dropped his wings; if victory was to attend them, he stood erect and soaring." The Vikings also, following Noah's example, used the raven as a discoverer of land. When uncertain of their course they let one loose, and steered the vessel in his track, deeming that the land lay in the direction of his flight; if he returned to the ship, it was supposed to be at a distance. A relic of the connection between the raven standard and the Danes seems to exist in the West Riding, where naughty children are told that a *black raven* will come and fetch them.

*c*. The raven as prognosticating death.

The superstitions regarding the raven current in Scotland and the North of England, which may be noticed under this head, are well summed up by Professor Wilson, "Recreations of Christopher North: Christopher in his Aviary—third canticle." "Certain it is that he is aware of deathbeds and funerals. Often does he flap his wings against door and window of hut, when the wretch within is in extremity, or, sitting on the heather roof, croaks horror into the dying dream. As the funeral winds its way towards the mountain cemetery he hovers aloft in the air, or, swooping down nearer to the bier, precedes the corpse like a sable saulie (*i.e.* mourner). The shepherds maintain that the raven is sometimes heard to laugh. Why not, as well as the hyena? Then it is that he is most diabolical, for he knows that his laughter is prophetic of human death. True it is—and it would be injustice to conceal the fact, much more to deny it—that ravens of old fed Elijah; but that was the punishment of some old sin committed by two who before the Flood bore the human shape, and who, soon after the ark rested on Mount Ararat, flew off to the desolation of swamped forests and the disfigured solitudes of the drowned glens. Dying ravens hide themselves from daylight in burial places among the rocks, and are seen hobbling into their tombs, as if driven thither by a flock of fears, and crouching under a remorse that disturbs instinct, even as if it were conscience. So sings and says the Celtic superstition—muttered to us in a dream—adding that there are raven ghosts, great black

bundles of feathers, for ever in the forest, night-hunting in famine for prey, emitting a last feeble croak at the blush of dawn, and then all at once invisible."

This belief in the prophetic power of the raven is very widely spread. In Denmark its appearance in a village is considered an indication that the parish priest will soon die. In Andalusia, if it was heard croaking over a house, an unlucky day is expected; repeated thrice, it is a fatal presage: if perching high, turning and croaking, a corpse will soon come from that direction. In many parts of Germany they are believed to hold the souls of the damned, sometimes to be the evil one himself. Witches ride on them. The hearts of three ravens burnt, reduced to powder, and then swallowed, make the man who is bold enough to take the dose an unerring shot. At least, so say the Bohemians. In Languedoc it is believed that wicked priests become ravens after death, and wicked nuns crows. (Babou, "Les Payens Innocents.")

Another evil property of the raven was the power it was supposed to possess of bringing infection. So Marlowe, in the *Jew of Malta*, speaks of

> "The sad presaging raven, that tolls
> The sick man's passport in her hollow beak;
> And in the shadow of the silent night
> Doth shake contagion from her sable wing."

And in the *Tempest*, Act I., sc. ii, Caliban says—

> "As wicked dew as e'er my mother brushed
> With raven's feather from unwholesome fen,
> Drop on you both!"

To see *one* raven was accounted lucky, *three* the reverse. In M. G. Lewis's ballad of "Bill Jones," the following are the introductory stanzas:—

> "Ah! well-a-day, the sailor said,
> Some danger must impend!
> Three ravens sit in yonder glade,
> And evil will happen, I'm sore afraid,
> Ere we reach our journey's end.
> And what have the ravens with us to do?
> Does their sight betoken us evil?
> To see *one* raven is lucky, 'tis true,
> But it's certain misfortune to light upon *two*,
> And meeting with *three* is the devil!"

Saturday, according to Mr. Robinson ("Poets' Birds,' p. 381), is the raven's day, and woe to the armies that fall on that day under the gloom of its ominous wing!

*d.* The raven and its young.

Ancient writers held the opinion that the raven was utterly wanting in parental care, expelling its young ones from the nest, and leaving them prematurely to shift for themselves, until it saw what colour they would be, during which time they were nourished with dew from heaven. It was to this that the psalmist was considered to refer (Ps. cxlvii. 9)—"He giveth to the beast his food, and to the young ravens which cry." So, too, in Job xxxviii. 41, we find, "Who provideth for the raven his food? When his young ones cry unto God they wander for lack of meat." However, this unkindness on the part of the parents was repaid, for when "they be old, and have their bills over-grown they die of famine, not sharpning their bills again by beating them on a stone, as the eagle doth. Neither will their young ones help them, but rather set upon them when they are not able to resist." (Swan's "Speculum Mundi," p. 389.)

*e.* The raven stone.

The raven, like the woodpecker, the swallow, and the hoopoe, is believed in some parts of Germany to have the power of procuring a marvellous stone, possessing talismanic powers. Kuhn ("Westfalische Sagen," ii. 76), quoted by Mr. Kelly (p. 197), gives the following account of the manner in which it may be obtained, premising that its possession confers invisibility. "When you have discovered a raven's nest you must climb the tree and take your chance that the parent birds are at least a hundred years old, for otherwise you will have your trouble for nothing. You are then to kill one of the nestlings, which must be a male bird, and not more than six weeks old. Then you may descend the tree, but be very careful to mark well the spot where it stands, for by-and-by it will become invisible, as soon as the raven comes back and lays a raven stone in the throat of its dead nestling. When it has done this you may go up again and secure the stone." I find in Zingerle's "Sitten und Bräuche des Tiroler Volkes," p. 87, a simpler and more matter-of-fact recipe. "Take an egg out of a raven's nest, *boil it hard* and replace it. Then the old bird will bring from the sea to her nest the stone in question."

*f.* The raven in art. In Christian art the raven is represented with the following saints.

(*a*) *S. Benedict* (March 21)—from the following incident in his life :—

A wicked priest, Florentius, being filled with jealousy and envy at the superior sanctity of Benedict, sent him a poisoned loaf. Benedict, aware of his treachery, threw the loaf upon the ground, and commanded a tame raven, which was domesticated in the convent, to carry it away and place it beyond the reach of any living creature. (Jamieson, "Legends of the Monastic Orders," p. 22.)

(*b*) *S. Paul the Hermit* (January 15).

S. Antony, having lived in the desert seventy-five years, began to be proud of his life of self-denial ; and a voice said to him in a vision, "There is one holier than thou art, for Paul the Hermit has served God in solitude for ninety years." So he started off in search of his superior, and, after being directed by a centaur and a satyr, arrived at Paul's cave the third day. As they sat together, a raven brought them a loaf of bread ; on which Paul said that for sixty years the raven had daily brought him half a loaf, but, because Antony had come, the portion was doubled.

(*c*) *S. Vincent* (January 22).

After the martyr's death, accompanied by fearful torments, at Saragossa, the proconsul Dacian ordered his body to be thrown to the wild beasts, but it was defended by a raven. In after years, when the Christians of Valencia, where his remains had been interred, fled from the Moors, they bore them with them, and, the vessel being driven on a promontory on the coast of Portugal, stopped there and buried them : hence the name Cape St. Vincent. Here, too, the ravens guarded the remains, and a portion of the cape is still called "el Monte de las Cuervas."

(*d*) *S. Meinrad* (August 14).

S. Meinrad was a hermit, who had built himself a cell on the site of the present monastery of Einsiedeln, in Canton Schwytz, where his sole companions were two tame ravens. One day he was brutally murdered by two brigands, who hoped to find treasures in his abode, but were naturally disappointed. The ravens, burning to avenge their master's death, followed his murderers to a little inn at Zurich, where they flapped their wings against the windows and screamed for hours. The robbers thought this a warning from above,

and confessed their crime. The little inn where they were found remained till modern times, and was known as the "Raven's Inn," immortalised by Longfellow (who still seems to have found it the abode of thieves) in the quatrain

"Beware of the Raven at Zurich!
'Tis a bird of omen ill,
With a noisy and unclean breast,
And a very, very, long bill."

It had two ravens, carved in black stone, built inside the wall. *Now* it has been almost entirely rebuilt, and, as the Hotel Bilhartz, has entirely changed its character. (For a somewhat similar story, see "Shropshire Folk-Lore," 225.)

(*e*) The raven is also depicted with SS. Oswald K. M., Ida, and William Firmatus.

*g*. Why ravens are black.

"In old days the ravens were of beautiful appearance, with plumage as white as snow, which they kept clean by constant washing in a stream. To this stream came once upon a time the Holy Child desiring to drink, but the ravens prevented him by splashing about and befouling the water. Whereupon He said—'Ungrateful birds! Proud you may be of your beauty, but your feathers, now so snowy white, shall become black and remain so till the judgment day!' and so they have ever been since."—Tyrol (from Zingerle, p. 86).

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*Section* OSCINES SCUTELLIPLANTARES.

*Family* ALAUDIDÆ.

*Genus* ALAUDA.

## SKYLARK (*Alauda arvensis*).

A.-S. *Láwerce*, whence—

1. Laverock or Lavrock.
Learock (Lancashire).
Lerruck (Orkney Isles).
Sky laverock (Roxburgh).
Rising lark (Northants).

From its habit of soaring skywards while singing.

Field lark.
Short-heeled lark (Scotland).

See below, 5 (*b*).

Lintwhite (Suffolk). See under Linnet, 3.
Lady hen—*i.q.* Our Lady's hen (Shetland). See below, 5.

2. Weather sayings.

Even in winter, should the season be mild, the lark may be heard singing, though not so frequently, nor for so long a period, as in spring and early

summer. But her joyous note cannot be regarded so surely as that of other birds as foretelling the advent of warmer weather. Hence the countryfolk in Brandenburgh say,

"Eine Lerche, die singt,
noch keinen Sommer bringt,
doch rufen Kukuk und Nachtigall,
so ist es Sommer überall."

(*i.e.* 'the song of one lark does not bring summer, but when the cuckoo and nightingale are heard, then summer has really come').

There is a Scotch proverb,

"As long as the laverock sings before Candlemas it will greet after it."

This corresponds with the French,

"Autant l'alouette chante avant la Chandeleur,
Autant elle se tait après,"

and the German,

"So lange vor Lichtmess die Lerche singt, so lange schweigt sie nachher."

While the Belgian saying is exactly the reverse : viz.—

"Zoo veel dagen de leeuwerik voor Vrouwen lichtmis zingt, zoo veel dagen zingt hy daer na."

The two following are current among the peasants in Silesia :—

*a*. St. Agnes (January 21) drives the larks out of the town.

*b*. St. Gorgonius (September 9) drives the larks away.

If larks fly high and sing continuously fine weather may be expected.

3. Larks begin to sing, in the late spring and summer, before sunrise ; hence it is said of an early riser, that he is "up with the lark." In the Limousin those who leave their beds betimes have the reward promised them that "qui se lève comme l'alouette, chantera comme elle."

4. Catching larks.

"In *Henry VIII.* (iii. 2)," says Mr. Dyer ("Folk-lore of Shakespeare," 126), "the Earl of Surrey, in denouncing Wolsey, alludes to a curious method of capturing larks, which was effected by small mirrors and red cloth. These, scaring the birds, made them crouch, while the fowler drew his nets over them.

"Let his grace go forward,
And dare us with his cap like larks."

In this case the cap was the scarlet hat of the cardinal, which it was intended to use as a piece of red cloth.

5. Song of the lark.

The following lines illustrate successfully the skylark's note—

"La gentille alouette avec son tirelire,
Tirelire, relire et tirelirant, tire
Vers la voûte du ciel : puis son vol en ce lieu
Vire, et semble nous dire—Adieu, adieu, adieu !"

with which may be compared the line in the song of Autolycus (*Winter's Tale*, iv. 2),

"The lark that tirra-lirra chants."

The difference in the song of this bird whilst on the ascent and descent has been often remarked. A close observer of its habits has said, with

reference to this, that "the notes in the former case are of a gushing impatience, hurried out, as it were, from an excessive overflow of melody, which becomes gradually modulated until the bird attains an elevation, when, as if satisfied with its efforts, it sinks gradually towards the earth, with a sadder and more subdued strain." Dante has noticed this variation in his "Divina Commedia":—

"Like to the lark,
That, warbling in the air, expatiates long:
Then, thrilling out her last sweet melody,
Drops, satiate with the sweetness."

Far different is the interpretation of the song which the French peasants give. According to them, the lark in her upward flight pours forth prayers to God, beseeching Him to allow her to soar to the sky, and promising never to swear or take His name in vain. No sooner, however, has she reached the wished-for height, than in her pride she begins at once to curse and abuse her Lord. Another version is current in Touraine, where it is believed that while ascending the lark implores S. Peter to admit her to Paradise:

"Pierre, laisse moi entrer,
Jamais plus ne faut'rai,
Jamais plus ne faut'rai."

But the Apostle refuses because, in her descent, she sings out of spite,

"J'faut'rai: j'faut'rai: j'faut'rai."

The following are Scotch rhymes given by Mr. Chambers:—

(*a*) "Larikie, larikie, lee!
Wha'll gang up to heaven wi' me?
No the lout that lies in his bed,
No the doolfu' that dreeps his head."

(*b*) "Up in the lift go we,
Te-hee, te-hee, te-hee, te-hee!
There's not a shoemaker on the earth
Can make a shoe to me, to me!
Why so? why so? why so?
Because my heel is as long as my toe!"

## 6. Folk lore.

In the line

"Some say the lark and loathed toad change eyes"
(*Romeo and Juliet*, Act iii. sc. 5),

Shakespeare alludes to an old saying, which arose from the fact of the lark having ugly eyes, and the toad very brilliant ones. The flesh of the lark was supposed by the old mediciners to strengthen the voice and increase its sweetness, while in Bohemia its eggs are still believed to have the same property. Aristophanes tells us that it existed, not only before the earth, but before Zeus and Kronos. Hence, "when the lark's father died, there was no earth to bury him in: then the lark buried its father in its own head. Goropius explains the belief that the lark existed before the earth, by observing that it sings seven times a day the praises of God in the high air, and that prayer was the first thing which existed in the world." (Gubernatis, ii. 274.)

Montanus ("Die Deutschen Volksfeste," p. 177) tells us that in Germany the lark is believed to be under the protection of the Blessed Virgin, whence the Low Dutch name *Lieveling—i.e. Liebling der Gottheit*. It is also called "the pious lark," because it never forgets to say grace before and after meals.

Never should we point at a lark with the finger, because if we do a whitlow is sure to come. If parents desire their children to be God-fearing, the first meat given to them after birth should be a roasted lark.

7. S. Francis of Assisi and the lark.

A lark brought her brood of nestlings to his cell, to be fed from his hand: he saw that the strongest of these nestlings tyrannised over the others, pecking at them, and taking more than his due share of the food; whereupon the good saint rebuked the creature, saying, "Thou unjust and insatiable! thou shalt die miserably, and the greediest animals shall refuse to eat thy flesh!" And so it happened, for the creature drowned itself through its impetuosity in drinking, and when it was thrown to the cats they would not touch it. (See Mrs. Jamieson's "Legends of the Monastic Orders," p. 263.)

## WOODLARK (*Alauda arborea*).

So called from its habit of perching on trees. Its note resembles the syllables "lu-lu" or "tur-lu," by which name, amongst others, it is known in France. In Provençe it is believed to say, "Cubri-cubri"—*i.e.* 'couvre, couvre (ton grain).'

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*Order* PICARIÆ.

*Sub-order* CYPSELI.

*Family* CYPSELIDÆ,

*Genus* CYPSELUS.

## SWIFT (*Cypselus apus*).

1. The swift's harsh unmusical scream has given it the names

Screecher (Hants).
Screamer or Squealer.
Jack squealer (Salop).
Screech martin.
Shriek owl.

2. From its impetuous flight and its dark colour, which give it an uncanny appearance, it is called

Devil (Berks).
Deviling (East Anglia; Lancashire; Westmoreland).
Devil bird (West Riding).
Swing devil (Northumberland).
Skeer devil (Devon; Somerset).

"Skeer," according to Halliwell, is "to move along quickly and slightly touching."

Devil's screecher (Devon).
Devil shrieker (Craven).

3. Various names.

Black martin (Scotland; Hants). See below, 5.
Brown swallow (Renfrew).
Black swift (Kirkcudbright).
Cran, or Crane, swallow (East Lothian).
Harley (Forfar).
Bucharet (do.)
Whip (West Riding).
Hawk swallow.

From its habit of hawking for flies.

4. Swift in heraldry.

In heraldry the swift is known under the name of Martlet, and is a mark of cadency belonging to the fourth son of the first house, the reason of which, according to an old writer, is, "For that being in a manner like unto that bird that lacketh feet wherewith to settle upon land, and they lacking land whereon to set their feet, may be thereby more reminded of that necessity wherein they stand of earning unto themselves an estate by prowess of arms and their own endeavours." This alludes to the inability of the bird to perch upon the ground or on a tree, hence its name of "apus," or without feet.

5. In France the swift is called Martinet (as in Brittany it has the title of "labouz Sant Martin"), and in Normandy the following legend is related of it. The man who first cultivated the hemp plant, being unable to preserve his crop from the depredations of the birds unless he was always on the watch, was forced to remain absent from mass. In his difficulty he called on Saint Martin for aid, the result being that during service they were all shut up safe in a barn, from whence they could not get out, though a harrow was the only bar to their exit. There was one exception: the martinet, Saint Martin's own bird, was not kept in confinement; but, though free, it did no damage to the crops. Ever since that time, when the harvest is over, the finest and best stalk of hemp may always be seen left standing in the field. ("L'Artiste," 3ième Série, ii. 300.) Compare with this the note on "the sparrows at Lindholme," p. 61, where the birds are represented as being starved to death in a barn, though only a harrow was put before the door.

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*Family* CAPRIMULGIDÆ.

*Genus* CAPRIMULGUS.

## NIGHTJAR (*Caprimulgus europæus*).

1. So called from the strange whirring, jarring noise, something like that produced by a spinning-wheel, uttered by the bird on summer evenings; whence also

Night churr.
Eve churr.
Wheel bird (Stirling).

Spinner (Wexford).
Razor grinder (Norfolk).
Scissor grinder (Norfolk; Suffolk).
Screech hawk (Berks; Bucks).
Churr owl (Aberdeen).
Jar owl.

The name of owl is applied from its loose plumage, large, prominent eyes, and nocturnal habits, which have also caused it to be called

2. Night hawk (Norfolk; Hants; Cornwall; Salop; Lancashire).
Night crow (Northants; Cornwall).

Cf. *Corbeau de nuit* (Vosges).

Night swallow.

Because it catches insects on the wing.

Cf. *Hirondelle de nuit* (Vosges); *Nachtschwalbe* (Bavaria).

3. From its fondness for moths and beetles it has also the names of

Dor hawk (Cornwall; East Suffolk).
"Dor"=dor beetle (*Geotrupes stercorarius*).

So Wordsworth writes:—

"The burring dor hawk round and round is wheeling;
That solitary bird
Is all that can be heard
In silence deeper far than deepest noon."

Moth hawk (Forfar).
Gnat hawk (Hants).

Cf. *Attrappe mouques* (Picardy).

4. There is a popular belief that it sucks the teats of cows and goats; hence

Goat sucker.

Cf. *Tette chèvre* (France); *Geismelker* (Germany).

In many places (*e.g.*, in the south of England and in some parts of Ireland) it is considered that animals either become blind or are infected with disease after being sucked. The country-people in West Sussex call this complaint "puck" or "puckeridge"—perhaps from Puck, a malignant spirit—and the bird itself "puck bird."

5. Various names.

Goat chaffer (Scotland).
Goat owl (Gloucestershire).
Fern owl (Salop; East Lothian).

Because it conceals itself in the bracken during the daytime.

In Nidderdale the country-people say that these birds embody the souls of unbaptised infants doomed to wander for ever in the air (Macquoid, "About Yorkshire," p. 143), and call them "gabble ratchets," *i.e.*, corpse hounds—a name which is equivalent to the "Gabriel hounds" of other localities—the unseen pack which is heard by night baying in the air. Hence the Shropshire term for the bird, "lich fowl," *i.e.* corpse fowl. Grimm ("D. M." iii. 1135) says that a spectral, winged being is called *Leichhuhn* (*i.e.* corpse hen), *Grabeule*, and *Todtenvogel*, because of its lazy, lingering flight. And Molbech, in his Danish Dictionary, writes of the Old Dan. *Helrakke* (*i.e.* death hound), that it is "a bird with a large head, staring eyes, crooked beak, sharp claws, which in days of yore was believed to appear only as a harbinger of some great mortality, but then to fly abroad by night and shriek aloud." (For the etymology of Gabble ratchet see *Notes and Queries*, Ser. IV., vii. 439.)

The Spaniards call the night jar *engana pastor*=shepherd's deceiver; *papa ventos*=father of the wind (cf. *engoulevent*, a French name for the bird); and "big mouth." The first of these titles is given because, from its supposed habit of sucking goats, the shepherds consider themselves defrauded of their proper yield of milk; the two others from the way it has of opening its enormous mouth when caught, and spitting like a cat.

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*Sub-Order* PICI.

*Family* PICIDÆ.

*Sub-family* PICINÆ.

*Genus* DENDROCOPUS.

### GREAT SPOTTED WOODPECKER (*Dendrocopus major*).

Also called

Woodwall (Hants). See Green Woodpecker, 1 *c*.
Wood pie (Staffordshire; Hants).
Black and white woodpecker (Norfolk).
French pie (Leicestershire).

"French" is here used in the sense of "strange, uncommon." In those parts of France where the nuthatch (*Sitta cæsia*) is rare, the peasants give it the name of the country from which it is supposed to come—*e.g.*, *geai du Limousin, geai d'Espagne, geai d'Auvergne.*

### LESSER SPOTTED WOODPECKER (*Dendrocopus minor*).

Also called

Little wood pie (Hants).
Barred woodpecker.

From the black bars on the bird's back.

Wood tapper (Salop).

Tapperer, Tabberer, or Tapper (Leicestershire).
Hickwall (Gloucestershire).

From A.-S. *hicgan*, to try. See under Green Woodpecker, 1 *b*.

Pump borer (Salop).

Because the noise it makes is like that produced by boring with an auger through hard wood.

Crank bird (Gloucestershire).

From the cry of the bird resembling the creaking produced by the turning of a windlass.

French galley bird (Sussex).

"French"=rare, uncommon, as before Galley bird=merry or laughing bird (from A.-S. *gal*=merry).

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*Genus* GECINUS.

## GREEN WOODPECKER (*Gecinus viridis*).

1. *a*. From its well-known habit of tapping with its bill the bark of trees, in search of worms and larvæ, come the names

Sprite (Suffolk).
Wood spite (Norfolk).
Wood spack (Norfolk; Suffolk).

Cf. *Specht* (Germany); Latin *picus*.

Green peek (Lincoln).
Wood pie (Somerset).
Wood knacker, *i.e.* knocker (Hants).

*b*. From A.-S. *hicgan*, to try, are derived

Hecco (obsolete).

"The crow is digging at his breast amain,
And sharp neb'd hecco stabbing at his brain."
(Drayton, "The Owl.")

Eccle (Oxfordshire).
Icwell (Northants).
Eaqual or Ecall (Salop).
Yuckel (Wilts).
Yockel (Salop).
Stock eikle (Worcestershire).
Jack ickle (Northants).

*c*. Whetile (Essex; Herts): *i.e.* Cutter, from A.-S. *thwitan*, to cut.

Whitwall : *i.q.* preceding.
Wood hack (Lincoln).
Cutbill (North).
Awl bird ; wood awl ; hood awl (Cornwall).
Woodwall (Somerset).

*i.q.* Wood awl ; mentioned in the ballad of "Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne" :—

"The woodweele sang and wolde not cease,
Sitting upon the spray,
So lowde he wakened Robin Hood,
In the greenwood where he lay."

Hewhole.
Pick a tree (North).
Nicker pecker ; Nickle (Notts).

2.* Its loud laughing note has caused it to be called

Laughing bird (Salop).
Yaffle (general).
Yaffler (Hereford).
Yaffingale (Wilts ; Hants).
High hoe, or Hai how (Salop).
Galley bird (Sussex). See previous page, under Lesser Spotted Woodpecker.
Hufil (East Riding).
Popinjay.

3. The constant iteration of its cry before rain (which brings out the insects on which it feeds) gives it the names

Rain bird ; Rain pie ; Rain fowl.

Cf. *Pic de la pluie* (Jura) ; *Pleu-pleu* (Normandy).

Dirt bird.
Storm cock (Salop).

Hence the sayings

"Lorsque le pivert crie
Il annonce la pluie."

"Quand el picozz picozza (taps)
O che l'e vent, o che l'e gozza (rain)."
(Milan.)

4. Various names.

Woodsucker (New Forest).
Woodchuck (Salop).
Snapper.
Jar-peg (Northants).

"Because it stands on an old stump and strikes with its beak on a hard knot or peg, so that the jar is heard a great distance." (Baker.)

## 5. Folk lore of the woodpecker.

(1) The woodpecker as a lightning-bringer, and the springwort.

The woodpecker was (Pliny, "Hist. Animal." x. 18), and is still (Grimm, "D. M." iii. 973 ; Kuhn, "Herabkunft des Feuers") popularly believed to be acquainted with a plant of great renown in art magic, called springwort, which has the property of opening doors and locks by its application, however hermetically sealed they may be. This is procured in the following manner : "by plugging up the hole in a tree in which a green or black woodpecker has its nest with young ones in it. As soon as the bird is aware of what has been done, it flies off in quest of a wondrous plant, which men might look for in vain, and returning with it in its bill, holds it before the plug, which immediately shoots out from the tree as if driven by the most violent force. But if one conceals himself before the woodpecker's return, and scares it when it approaches, the bird will let the root fall ; or a red or white cloth may be spread below the nest and the bird will drop the root upon the cloth after it has served its own turn. In the Mark it is believed that the woodpecker drops the springwort upon a red cloth for the purpose of burning it, lest it should fall into anybody's hands, for it mistakes the cloth for a fire. In Swabia they say the hoopoe brings the springwort, and lets it fall into water or fire to destroy it. To obtain it, therefore, one must have in readiness a pan of water, or kindle a fire, or spread out a red cloth or garment, on which the bird will let the plant drop, believing it to be a fire. Evidently the original notion was, that the bird must return the plant to the element from which it springs, that being either the water of the clouds, or the lightning fire enclosed therein." (Kelly, 174-7.) The same power of opening closed cavities by means of a herb is attributed to the martin and the raven ; in Switzerland to the hoopoe, in Tyrol to the swallow. The springwort is, according to some, the root of *Euphorbia lathyris,* which the Italians call *sferracavallo,* because its power over metals is so great that a horse stepping on it has to leave the shoe behind ; but seems with greater probability to be the St. John's wort, which can only be found among the fern on Midsummer eve, when it will be seen shining with golden light. (Kuhn, 219 : see for further particulars, Grimm, "D. M.," 971-3.) In France the legend assumes a slightly different form : "The woodpecker plant is a magic root which has the virtue of communicating superhuman strength to him who rubs his limbs with it. It is to be procured in the following manner: Watch carefully the flight of a green woodpecker, noticing at the same time in which direction his eyes are turned; and when you see him alight near a plant and rub his beak upon it, then congratulate yourself on having discovered the precious talisman. This inestimable treasure, which enables the woodpecker to pierce the heart of the largest oak, is also sometimes to be found in the nest of the bird. It is remarkable that the plant is covered with dew, winter and summer alike. No iron or steel instrument must be used in cutting or uprooting it. In some of our villages not a few poor wretches spend all their time in searching for this treasure ; and their number should be considerable if, as people say is the case, the woodpecker makes the valleys ring with his prolonged mocking laugh, when he sees one of these vagrants in quest of his herb." (Laisnel de la Salle, "Croyances et Légendes de la Centre," vol. i., p. 216.) Hence the name of the woodpecker in Luxembourg, *Beche Fêt—i.e. Bec Fer.*

(2) As instances of the connection between the woodpecker and the clouds (whence come the rain and lightning), I give two legends, differing in detail, but with the same conclusion.

*a.* "In those days when our Lord and S. Peter wandered upon earth, they came to an old wife's house, who sat baking. Her name was Gertrude, and she had a red mutch on her head. They had walked a long way, and were both hungry, and our Lord begged hard for a bannock to stay their hunger.

Yes, they should have it. So she took a little tiny piece of dough and rolled it out; but as she rolled it, it grew until it covered the whole griddle.

"Nay, that was too big; they couldn't have that. So she took a tinier bit still; but when that was rolled out it covered the whole griddle just the same, and that bannock was too big, she said. They couldn't have that either.

"The third time she took a still tinier bit, so tiny that you could scarce see it; but it was the same story over again—the bannock was too big.

"'Well,' said Gertrude, 'I can't give you anything; you must go without, for all these bannocks are too big.' Then our Lord waxed wroth, and said, 'Since you loved me so little as to grudge me a morsel of food, you shall have this punishment. You shall become a bird, and seek your food between bark and bole, and never get a drop to drink save when it rains.'

"He had scarce said the last word before she was turned into a great black woodpecker, or 'Gertrude's bird,' and flew from her kneading trough right up the chimney. And till this very day you may see her flying about, with her red mutch on her head, and her body all black, because of the soot in the chimney; and so she hacks and taps away at the trees for her food, and whistles when rain is coming, for she is ever athirst, and then she looks for a drop to cool her tongue." (Dasent's "Popular Tales from the Norse," p. 230.)

Compare with the above the tales of the owl (p. 123), and the cuckoo (p. 120).

*b.* "At the beginning of all things, when God had finished creating the earth, He ordered the birds to excavate with their beaks the hollows that were destined, when filled with water, to become seas, rivers, and pools. All obeyed except the woodpecker, who in sullen obstinacy sat still and refused to move. What was the result? Why, that when all was completed the good God declared that, as she was unwilling to peck up the earth, her lot would be to be ever pecking at wood; and moreover that, as she had nothing to do with making the cavities in which water was to be stored, she should drink nothing but the rain, and get that as she could! Hence it is that the wretched bird is ever calling to the clouds 'Plui-plui,' and that she ever keeps an upward, climbing attitude, in order to receive in her open beak the drops which fall from the sky." (Current in the Gironde, from "Le Paysan Riche," by Honoré Sclafer, quoted by M. Rolland, p. 63.) See also a Prussian folk tale, given by Grimm, ii. 674. With this may be compared an Esthonian story, given by Fählmann, "Dorpater Verhandlungen," i. 42. "When God had finished creating the heavens and the earth, He ordered the birds and beasts to set to work and excavate the Embach (a deep ravine near Dorpat, in Esthonia, concerning the origin of which strange tales are told). All obeyed except the woodpecker, who flew lazily from bough to bough piping her song. Thereupon the Lord asked her, 'Hast thou nothing else to do but to show off thy fine clothes and give thyself airs?' The bird made answer, 'The work is a dirty one. I cannot give up my golden bright coat and silver shining hose.' 'O vain creature!' cried the Lord, 'henceforth thou shalt wear naught but hose of coaly black, neither shalt thou quench thy thirst from brook or stream. Raindrops falling from the leaves shall be thy drink; and thy voice shall only be heard when other creatures are hiding themselves through fear of the approaching storm.'"

In some parts of France (*e.g.*, Normandy, the Centre, Burgundy) the green woodpecker is called "l'avocat" or "le procureur du meunier," because he is supposed, in times of drought, to plead for rain as persistently as the owner of a water-mill.

In Carinthia it is the crow (in Bohemia the kite, see p. 137), according to popular belief, that is condemned to drink nothing but rain-water. ("Zeitschrift f. D. M." iii. 29.

*Sub-family* JYNGINÆ.

*Genus* JYNX.

**WRYNECK** (*Jynx torquilla*).

1. So called from the extraordinary pliancy of its neck; whence also

Writhe neck.

Cf. *Torcol* (France); *Capu tortu* (Sicily); *Drehhals* (Germany)

Snake bird (Sussex; Hants; Somerset).

Cf. *Cou de couleuvre* (Meuse); *Nattervogel* (Germany).

2. From its arrival the same time as, or a little before, the cuckoo, it has the names of

Cuckoo's mate (Hants; Salop; East Anglia).
Cuckoo's footman or cuckoo's fool (Gloucestershire).
Cuckoo's messenger.
Cuckoo's marrow, *i.e.* companion or friend (Midlands).
Cuckoo's leader (Norfolk).

The Welsh name is *Gwas-y-gog*, *i.e.* cuckoo's knave.

Hobby bird (Old Norfolk).

"Because," says Sir Thos. Browne, "it comes either with, or a little before, the hobbies (*i.e.* cuckoos) in the spring."

3. Various names.

Long tongue or Tongue bird.

From its long projectile tongue. Cf. *Longuo lingo* (Bouches du Rhone).

Emmet hunter.

From its partiality to ants. Cf. *Formigué* (Pyrenees); *Mierenjager* (Holland).

Pea bird.

From its sharp utterance of the word "pea-pea."

Barley bird, barley snake bird (Hants).

From its appearance while barley is being sown.

Summer bird (Northumberland).
Mackerel bird (Guernsey).

Because it arrives at the time when mackerel are in season.

Slab (North).
Nile bird (Berks; Bucks).
Little eten bird (Hants).
Weet bird (Do.)

From its cry.

Dinnick (Devon).

From its brown plumage.

Turkey bird.

Because it erects and ruffles the feathers of its neck when disturbed.

4. In Hampshire there is a saying that "the cuckoo whit" (? the wryneck) orders his coat at Beaulieu fair (April 15) and puts it on at Downton (April 23).

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*Sub-order* ANISODACTYLÆ.

*Family* ALCEDINIDÆ.

*Genus* ALCEDO.

## KINGFISHER (*Alcedo ispida*).

Cf. *Re pescatore* (Italy).

Dipper (Salop).

Called in Normandy, *Oiseau de Saint Martin*; in Brittany, *Oiseau de S. Jean* or *S. Nicolas*; in Germany, *Eisvogel*, *Königsfischer*.

The ancients believed, so Pliny ("Nat. Hist." Lib. X. cap. 32 and xxxii. 8) informs us, that the Halcyon, as they called the kingfisher, constructed a nest of the bones of fish, which floated on the water, and that so long as the female sat on the eggs, no storm ruffled the ocean. The period of incubation began seven days before the winter solstice, and lasted for seven days after, which were the halcyon days to which Shakespeare refers, *Henry VI.*, Pt. I., Act i., sc. 2 :—

"Expect St. Martin's summer, halcyon days."

Sir Thomas Browne, in his "Vulgar Errors," Book III., chap. x., says, "That a kingfisher, hanged by the bill, showeth us in what quarter the wind is, by an occult and secret propriety, converting the breast to that part of the horizon from whence the blow, is a received opinion, and very strange—introducing natural weathercocks, and extending magnetical positions as far as animal natures; a conceit supported chiefly by present practice, yet not made out by reason or experience." This opinion is still currently received in some parts of England and in France (*e.g.* on the Loire, where the bird is called "vire vent"): and is alluded to by Shakespeare (*King Lear*, Act ii. sc. 2), where Kent speaks of those who

"Renege, affirm, and turn their halcyon beaks
With every gale and vary of their masters:"

also by Marlowe, *Jew of Malta*; see Dodsley's "Old Plays," ed. Reed, vol. viii., p. 307—

"But how now stands the wind?
Into what corner peers my halcyon's bill?
Ha! to the east? Yes: see how stand the vanes
East and by south."

M. Gubernatis writes, with reference to the connection of the kingfisher with winds and storms, and also with reference to its French name (also common in Italy) of St. Martin's bird, "This bird, several kinds of woodpeckers, the wren, the crow and the redbreast—who throws funeral flowers on unburied bodies—are all sacred to St. Martin, the holy gravedigger, the bringer of winter, who, according to the Celtic and German traditions, divides his own cloak with poor men and covers them" (vol. ii., p. 270).

In the neighbourhood of Metz the kingfisher is called the "blue bird," and the following legend is narrated of it. After Noah had despatched the dove from the ark he caught the blue bird, saying, "At any rate *you* will not be afraid of the waters, as you are no stranger to them; so take wing and see if the earth is visible." Day was just about to dawn as she departed, and she had hardly left the shelter of the ark when such a tremendous storm came on that, to avoid being dashed into the waves, she flew directly heavenwards. For months had her wings been at rest, so she was fresh and vigorous, and rose so quickly that she soon came to the blue ether, into which she dashed unhesitatingly. And with what result? That her plumage, once a sober grey, became a shining, brilliant azure! Higher and higher she flew, till at last the sun began to rise beneath her; and, unable to resist the attraction of seeing it when close at hand, she turned downwards. But the nearer she approached the greater became the heat, till before long her breast feathers began to be scorched by the blaze. This made her retrace her flight towards the earth, in order to quench the smouldering flame in the waters with which it was covered. After having enjoyed several refreshing dips she remembered her errand, but alas! the ark was nowhere to be seen. In fact, during her absence the dove had returned with the olive leaf, and then the ark, driven hither and thither by the storm, had grounded on Mount Ararat, and Noah had broken it up, intending to build a house out of the materials with which it was constructed. Whereupon the blue bird, seeing nothing, uttered shrill cries, calling for her master, but all in vain. And so, even to this day, you may see her flying along the river banks and looking for the ark or for some of its remains; so too, even to this day, you may see, reflected in her upper plumage, the azure of the celestial blue, while her breast still flames with fiery red from her imprudence in approaching the sun.

Giraldus Cambrensis gives us some strange information about the kingfisher, which he calls the martinet, in his "Topography of Ireland" (ed. Wright, p. 39)—"It is remarkable in these little birds that, if they are preserved in a dry place when dead, they never decay; and if they are put among clothes and other articles, they preserve them from the moth and give them a pleasant odour. What is still more wonderful—if, when dead, they are hung up by their beaks in a dry situation, they change their plumage every year, as if they were restored to life, as though the vital spark still survived and vegetated through some mysterious remains of its energy."

To the kingfisher was ascribed by the ancients the power of enriching its possessor, of preserving peace and harmony in families, and imparting to the lady who wore its feathers additional grace and loveliness.

The Ojibway Indians give the following reason for the white mark on the kingfisher's breast, and the tuft of feathers on its head. "They say that Manabozho, their supreme deity, once gave it a white sort of medal for useful information, and that the bird hardly escaped with the ruffling of its head feathers the attempt of the god to wring its neck while he was so rewarding it." (J. A. Farrer, quoting Schoolcraft's "Algic Researches," ii. 225.)

The Bohemians believe that he who is fortunate enough to catch a kingfisher ought to keep it in his house confined in a cage, because it is the spirit of good luck (Grohmann). Gmelin ("Voyage en Sibérie") tells us that the Tartars pluck the feathers from a kingfisher, "cast them into the water, and carefully preserve such as float, pretending that if with one of these feathers they

touch a woman, or even her clothes, she must fall in love with them. The Ostiacs take the skin, the bill, and the claws of this bird, shutting them up in a purse, and so long as they preserve this sort of amulet, they believe they have no ill to fear. The person who taught me this means of living happy could not forbear shedding tears while he told me that the loss of a kingfisher's skin had caused him to lose both his wife and his goods."

In Brittany the country people say that a kingfisher's head shines by night like a Will-o'-the-wisp, and that the bird is much given to swearing. (Sebillot.)

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*Family* UPUPIDÆ.

*Genus* UPUPA.

## HOOPOE (*Upupa epops*).

1. The name hoopoe corresponds with the Latin *upupa*, French *huppe*, all of which words are intended to express the bird's cry.

2. The hoopoe is commonly considered to be extremely filthy and unclean in its feeding and general manner of living. Hence the Germans call it *Stinker* or *Mistvogel*, but more generally *Wiedehopf*; and in Anjou the country-people give it the title of *Coq puant*. In the "Penny Cyclopædia," xxvi. 35, the following old French lines are given as referring to its unsavoury reputation—

> "Dédans un creux avec fange et ordure
> La huppe fait ses œufs et sa maison."

There is no doubt, as Mr. Wood remarks ("Nat. Hist." ii. 201), that its nest has a very pungent and disgusting odour; but this arises from the fact that the tail glands of the bird secrete a substance that is extremely offensive to human nostrils, although it is unheeded by the birds themselves.

3. From its striking appearance and remarkable form are derived the names

Coq des bois (Vosges).
Coq d'été (Brittany).
Serviteur au roi (Montbeliard).
Gallo di Marzo (Genoa).

In Sweden it is known by the name of *Här Fogel*, the army bird, because from its ominous cry, frequently heard in the wilds of the forest, while the bird itself moves off as any one approaches, the common people have supposed that seasons of war and scarcity are impending (Lloyd's "Scand. Advent," ii. 321).

The Arabs, according to Mr. Tristram ("Ibis," i. 27), call it "the doctor," believing it to possess marvellous medicinal qualities, its head being an indispensable ingredient in all charms, and in the practice of witchcraft.

The Turkish name is *Tir-chaoush* or Courier bird, because its tuft resembles the plume of feathers worn by a courier in token of his office.

## 4. Folk lore of the hoopoe.

(1) As a lightning bird.

In Swabia (Meier, "Schwab. Sagen," No. 265) the hoopoe is supposed to be acquainted with the mysterious springwort, the plant before which doors and rocks fly open, as in North Germany the woodpecker and in Tyrol the swallow are believed to have the same knowledge. Jewish fable (Buxtorf, "Lex Talmud.," col. 2455) tells us that it was by means of this bird that Solomon gained possession of the coveted "schamir," a worm the size of a barleycorn, but able to penetrate the hardest flint, with the aid of which he wrought the stones for his temple. So, too, Ælian relates of the hoopoe that, by means of a plant called *πόα*, she can burst through any obstacle separating her from her young ("Hist. Animal," iii. 26). For more information on this subject see Baring Gould's "Curious Myths," ii. 130, 131.

(2) Owing to the peculiarity of its appearance this bird has been the subject of many quaint legends : *e.g.*—

*a*. Oriental.

"It is related that Solomon was once journeying across the desert, and was fainting with heat, when a large flock of hoopoes came to his assistance, and by flying between the sun and the monarch formed an impenetrable cloud with their wings and bodies. Grateful for their ready help, Solomon asked the birds what reward they would choose in return for their services. After some consultation among themselves the hoopoes answered that they would like each bird to be decorated with a golden crown ; and in spite of Solomon's advice they persisted in their request, and received their crowns accordingly. For a few days they were justly proud of their golden decoration, and strutted among the less favoured birds with great exultation, and repaired to every stream or puddle, in order to admire the reflection of their crowns in the water. But before very long a fowler happened to see one of the promoted birds, and on taking it in his net, discovered the value of its crown. Immediately the whole country was in an uproar, and from that moment the hoopoes had no rest. Every fowler spread his nets for them, every archer lay in wait for them, and every little boy set his springle or laid his rude trap in the hope of catching one of these valuable birds. At last they were so wearied with persecution that they sent one or two of the survivors to Solomon, full of repentance at their rejection of his advice, and begging him to rescind the gift which they had so unwisely demanded. Solomon granted their request, and removed the golden crown from their heads ; but, being unwilling that the birds should be left without a mark by which they might be distinguished from their fellows, he substituted a crown of feathers for that of gold, and dismissed them rejoicing." (Wood's "Nat. Hist." vol. ii., p. 200 ; Curzon's "Visits to the Monasteries in the Levant," p. 152.)

Like the lapwing (see *infra*), it has the credit of being able to point out the locality of hidden springs. This idea seems to have arisen from the habit of the bird, when settling on the ground, of bending down the head and raising it suddenly with a jerky motion.

*b*. Egyptian.

Mr. Houghton, in his "Natural History of the Ancients," p. 207, says that when the Egyptians wished to represent the quality of gratitude they delineated a hoopoe, because this is the only dumb animal which, after it has

been brought up by its parents, repays their kindness to them when old, for it makes a nest in the place where it was reared, and trims their wings and brings them food, till the old birds acquire a new plumage, and are able to look after themselves. This agrees with a Hindū story—a variation of the legend of King Lear, narrated by Ælian. (Gubernatis ii. 230.)

*c.* German.

In Tyrol the hoopoe is believed to possess magical power. The man who carries its eyes about with him in his pocket is beloved by all, and is ever successful in the law courts, while its head protects the bearer against enchantment. (Busch, "Deutsche Volksaberglaube," p. 209.)

(3) The hoopoe as prognosticating weather.

Gubernatis (ii. 230) says that by the ancients its song before the vines ripened was looked upon as a prediction of a plentiful vintage and good wine. It is believed to foretell rain by its hoarse cry.

(4) The hoopoe and the bittern.

"Which is your favourite pasture for your cows?" asked a gentleman of an old herdsman. "Here, sir," was the answer, "where the grass is not too rich and not too poor; anywhere else would be useless." "Why so?" The herdsman replied, "Do you hear that booming cry proceeding from the meadow? That is the bittern, who once kept cows, as did the hoopoe also; and I will tell you a story about them.—The bittern fed his herds on rich green pastures, where flowers grew in abundance, so that his cattle became wild and frisky. But the hoopoe drove his on to high and barren hills, where the wind blew the sand about in clouds, and they got thinner and thinner, and lost all their strength. One day, towards evening, when the herdsmen were about to return home, the bittern could not get his cows together, they were so mettlesome, frolicking and kicking up their heels all round him. He called 'Bunt herum!' (*i.e.* Here, Dapple, here!), but all to no purpose—they would not listen. On the other hand, the hoopoe could not make his cows stand up, they were so weak and tired. 'Up! up! up!' he cried; but it was of no use—there they lay on the ground, and refused to stir. That is what happens if you go to extremes. Even now, although these birds have given up keeping cattle, the bittern still cries Herum, and the hoopoe Up! up!" (Grimm, "Kinder- und Hausmarchen, No. 173.)

(5) The hoopoe and the woodpecker.

The hoopoe is the friend and companion of the woodpecker (*Gecinus viridis*). Once upon a time the two birds resolved to quit their native land for foreign parts; but the sea lay in their path! However, they flew half-way across; but then the woodpecker, who was tired, went fast asleep! The hoopoe, to save his companion from drowning, cried, "Hoop-hoop!" thus keeping his drowsy friend awake, and enabling him to make the passage in safety. The woodpecker, who was aware of the kindness that had been shown to him, was anxious to show his gratitude, and so set himself to bore a hole in a tree to serve as a nest for the hoopoe. This was the first time the woodpecker exercised his boring powers. (Haute Bretagne.)

(6) The hoopoe and the cuckoo.

In early times the cuckoo had a crown, but the hoopoe has deprived her of it. It happened in this wise. When the birds were about to celebrate a wedding, the hoopoe being selected to give away the bride, and therefore anxious to add to the dignity of his appearance, asked the cuckoo to lend him his crown. The latter kindly consented, but when the hoopoe discovered how well it suited him he kept it and never returned it to its owner! Ever

since the cuckoo has been calling "Kluku! Kluku!"—*i.e.* 'You knave! you knave!' while the hoopoe answers "Jdu! Jdu!"—*i.e.* 'I'm coming! I'm coming!' (Grohmann, p. 68).

In Bavaria the hoopoe is supposed to play the part of attendant or lackey to the cuckoo (as the wryneck is called in Devonshire the "dinnick" or cuckoo's mate), and, according to Mr. King ("Sacred Trees and Flowers," in *Quarterly Review* for July 1863), has a mysterious connection with the plantain, or waybread, which is said to have been once a maiden who, watching by the wayside for her lover, was changed into the plant which still loves to fix itself beside the beaten path. Once in seven years it becomes a bird—either the cuckoo or the hoopoe. (This seems to require corroboration; but Simrock refers to Panzer's "Bayerische Sagen," ii. 204, for further particulars—a work to which I have failed to obtain access.)

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*Sub order* COCCYGES.

*Family* CUCULIDÆ.

*Genus* CUCULUS.

## CUCKOO (*Cuculus canorus*).

1. So called from its cry.

Cf. *Coucou* (France); *Kukuk* (Germany); *Koekoek* (Holland); *Cucco, Cucullo* (Italy); *Koku* (Persia).

2. Other names are

Gowk (North; Scotland).

Cf. *Gaec, Geac* (Anglo-Saxon); *Goek* (Sweden); *Gouk* (Norway).

Gawky (Dorset).

In Middleton's *Trick to catch the Old One*, Act iv., sc. 5, the cuckoo is called "the Welsh ambassador." It has been suggested that this name was given to it because its notes resemble words in the Welsh language (*Gentleman's Magazine*, 1840); also from the annual arrival of Welshmen in search of summer or other employment, who might enter England about the time of the cuckoo's appearance (Dyer's "Folk-Lore," p. 61). But the following song, which occurs in a pamphlet entitled "The Welsh Ambassador, 1643—Her Embassador's Message described, to the tune of the Merry Pedler," etc., seems to point to a different reason:—

"On a day when Jenkin
Did walke abroad to heare
The birds rejoyce,
With pleasant voyce;
In spring time of the yeare;
Proudly and loudly
Her heard a bird then sing,
Cuckoe, Cuckoe.
The cuckoe never lins (*i.e.* ceases),
But still doth cry so mery merily,
And Cuckoe, cuckoe sings.

"He thought her had flouted
Poore Jenkin with a jeere,
And told her in scorne
That the horne
Should on her brow appeare;
Soundly and roundly
This bird one note doth sing
Cuckoe, cuckoe.
The cuckoe never lins, etc.

"It is knowne her country
Doth many profits bring,
Sheepe and goates
And cloathe for coates,
And many a good thing;
Cheeses and friezes,
And that fine bird that sings
Cuckoe, cuckoe, etc.

"Her colour is most comely,
And a Round-head is she,
And yet no sect
She doth respect
But of her note is free:
'Tis pity
in City
That this same bird neare sings
Cuckoe, cuckoe, etc.

"If that she in Cheap-side
Upon the Crosse were seene,
Out of hand
The trayned band;
Would come against her in spleen;
Drumming and gunning,
To kill this bird that sings
Cuckoe, cuckoe, etc.

"Therefore her Embassadour
No pedler is of wares,
Her hath no pack
Upon her back,
Nor for no Cuckold cares:
Without feare
Doth jeere
And in one note still sings
Cuckoe, cuckoe, etc."

### 3. Folk lore of the cuckoo.

The folk lore of the cuckoo is almost inexhaustible. Mr. Hardy has compiled a most valuable and interesting store of information on this subject in his "Popular History of the Cuckoo," which appeared in the "Folk-Lore Record," Part II., and to which I am much indebted. To it I must refer those who are anxious for further particulars; also to Mannhardt's most learned paper in the "Zeitschrift für Deutsche Mythologie," vol. iii., pp. 209-98.

(1) The cuckoo as announcing spring.

"There is no bird," says Grimm ("D. M." 675), "to which the gift of prophecy is more universally conceded than the cuckoo, whose clear and measured voice rings in the young foliage of the grove." In this respect, as the herald of warmth, he seems to be intimately connected with S. Gertrude, the successor of Freya or Iduna, goddesses of love, of spring, of beauty, whose tears were pearls and flowers. Therefore, like S. Gertrude, who is believed to be the banisher of ice and snow, he announces spring. There are many rhymes commemorating the several epochs of his stay with us, are which the reader is referred to Mr. Hardy, the best known of which is perhaps the following :—

"In April, the cuckoo shows his bill :
In May, he sings both night and day ;
In June, he altereth his tune ;
In July, he prepares to fly ;
Come August, go he must." (Norfolk.)

To which the Suffolk people add—

"In September, you'll ollers remember ;
In October, 'ull never get over."

In Northumberland his advent is earlier, for

"The cuckoo comes of mid March,
And cucks of mid Aperill ;
And gauns away of Midsummer month (or Lammas-tide),
When the corn begins to fill."

This date for his departure agrees with the Guernsey rhyme—

"Le coucou s'en va en Août ;
L'épi d'orge lui pique la gorge."

A West Shropshire proverb runs—

"The cuckoo sings in April
The cuckoo sings in May ;
The cuckoo sings at Midsummer,
But not upon the day."

So a common Lancashire saying runs—

"The first cock of hay
Frights the cuckoo away ;"

corresponding with the Breton story that the first time the cuckoo came to Brittany, he made his nest like the other birds, and then, highly delighted with himself, took a walk in the fields. But alas ! a waggon full of hay passed over him and crushed his loins, hence it is that he flies so heavily. Ever since that fatal day, he leaves the country when the hay is ready for cutting (Sebillot ii. 172). The west of Scotland ploughman coincides with the Guernsey fisherman in the opinion that the cuckoo flies away on the first sight of barley in the ear ; and in Lanarkshire they say that "the cuckoo comes wi' a haw-leaf, and gangs away wi' a bear (four-rowed barley) head." It is believed in many countries that the cuckoo always appears on some particular day. Thus—

*a.* In some parts of England there is a saying that—

"On the third of April
Comes in the cuckoo and nightingale,"

on which see under Nightingale, 1 (1).

In Sussex it is believed that a certain old woman has charge of all the cuckoos, and fills her apron with them in the spring. If she is in a good humour she allows several to take flight at Heathfield fair, April 14, but only permits one or two to escape if cross or vexed.

In Northamptonshire the 15th of April is called cuckoo-day.

In Worcestershire they say that you never hear the cuckoo before Tenbury fair (April 20th), or after Pershore fair (June 26), where he buys a horse and rides away on it.

In the West Riding the cuckoo is supposed to arrive on April 21st.

In Wales, according to Mr. Dyer ("English Folk-Lore," p. 57), "it is considered unlucky to hear the cuckoo before the 6th of April, but you will have prosperity for the whole year if you hear it on the 28th."

Mr. Hardy says that "in Scotland the advent of the cuckoo calls forth the old season's spite," and the consequence is "a gowk storm." Hence in Craven the proverb :—

"In the month of Averel
The gowk comes over the hill
In a shower of rain."

*b.* In France.

The cuckoo is considered in the south of France to arrive on St. Benedict's day (March 21), and there is a saying "that he ought to be heard on that festival; and that if he has not begun his song by the 25th (the Feast of the Annunciation of the B. V. M.) he must be either killed or frozen." The latter half of this is current in Normandy; while the Breton peasants make the three last days of March the date of his arrival; and in Franche Comté he is expected on April 1st. (Rolland.)

*c.* In Germany.

The German country-people make the 14th of April (the festival of SS. Valerian and Tiburtius) the date of his visit, when he is accompanied by the nightingale (which see).

*d.* In Switzerland.

The Swiss imagine that the cuckoo never sings before the 3rd of April, and never after Midsummer; but he cannot sing till he has eaten a bird's egg. This is a superstition shared by the Bohemians (Grohmann, p. 69).

*e.* In Norway.

"The 1st of May (SS. Philip and James) is called in Norway 'Gawk's mass' (cuckoo's mass), because then the cuckoo was expected to make its appearance. Hence the emblem for the day is a cuckoo." ("Cambridge Antiquarian Communications," iv. 159.

*f.* In Italy.

"The Venetians say that this bird ought to come on the 8th of April; if he does not come on the 8th he has either been caught or is dead; if he does not come on the 10th he has been caught in the hedge; if he does not come on the 20th he has been caught in the corn; and if he does not come on the 30th, the shepherds must have eaten him with polenta." (Pasqualigo, "Proverbi Veneti," ii. 100.)

The arrival of the cuckoo naturally leads to the question, Where does he come from? The inhabitants of Towednack, in Cornwall, will refer you for an answer to their cuckoo feast, which takes place on the nearest Sunday to the 28th of April; the origin of which is as follows :—"It happened in very early times, when winters extended further into the spring than they do now, that one of the old inhabitants resolved to be jovial, nowithstanding the in-

clemency of the season ; so he invited all his neighbours, and to warm his house he placed on the burning faggots the stump of a tree. It began to blaze, and, inspired by the warmth and light, they began to sing and drink ; when lo ! with a whiz and a whirr, out flew a bird from the hollow in the stump, crying 'Cuckoo ! cuckoo !'" (Hunt's "Popular Romances of the West of England," ii., 200). This reminds us of Willoughby's story of the cuckoo lying dormant in a bundle of feathers in the hollow of an old tree, which shouted 'Cuckoo !' in winter when aroused from its slumbers by the heat of a stove ; and Mr. Hardy (p. 20) tells us that in Gassendus, "Physicæ, etc.," the cuckoo is said to have issued from a Christmas log in Champagne. But the notion of the hibernation of swallows, etc., without food is very old, alluded to by Aristotle, amongst others.

Having got the cuckoo, the next thing seems to have been to keep him, as it appears he was considered as the cause of summer. Hence we have several tales, recorded by Mr. Hardy, of various attempts on the part of sages to enclose him—*e.g.*, the "wise men of Gotham," in Nottinghamshire ; the "coves of Lorbottle," in Northumberland ; certain Cornishmen, residence unknown ; and the "cuckoo penners" of Somerset, to all of whom apply the words of Fulke Greville, Lord Brooke (1554—1628), that

"Fools only hedge the cuckoo in."

If his origin was mysterious, so too was the change which he was supposed to undergo. Aristotle and Pliny both mention that it was the belief of some that during a portion of the year he was converted into a real bird of prey. A belief not yet extinct, as the following table will show :—

| | |
|---|---|
| In Durham and Yorkshire | the cuckoos are said to turn into hawks in the winter (*Times*, Sept. 3, 1863). |
| In Cambridgeshire | they are cuckoos for three months, and then change into hawks. |
| In Derbyshire | they change into hawks, and whistle and sing during the transformation ("Long Ago," 205). |
| In Switzerland | the cuckoos heard in one year will be young eagles in the next. |
| In Bohemia | the bird is a cuckoo during the spring, but the rest of the year he is a hawk who steals fowls and kills pigeons (Grohmann, 69). |
| In North Germany | he becomes a sparrow-hawk (after S. John's day), which in the main agrees with a statement in Plutarch (see Gubernatis, "Zool. Mythol," ii. 235). |
| In Normandy | "Entre Juin et Juillet<br>Le coucou devient émouchet." |

In some parts of France it is believed that about S. James' day he becomes a bird of prey, but resumes his former shape in the spring, when he returns on the kite's back. (This arises from the feeble and lean appearance of the bird, owing to its moulting about the end of March.)

(2) The cuckoo as prognosticator of the weather and harvest

Freya, whose attributes S. Gertrude inherited, was, as Sir G. W. Cox points out ("Aryan Mythology," i. 381), the bringer of rain and sunshine for the fruits of the earth. Hence the song of the cuckoo, who is intimately connected with her, marks the growing rains of spring, and also foretells the character of the coming harvest.

*a.* The cuckoo is the bird of spring ; hence, says Gubernatis, "When it appears, the first claps of thunder are heard in the sky, announcing the season of heat." The Germans connect it with good and warm weather, and in Franche Comté the country people have a proverb,

"Quand le coucou chante et que le soleil lu (luit)
Les chemins sont toue rassu (*i.e.* sont bientot secs),"

corresponding with the Devonshire saying that "the cuckoo comes to eat up the dirt," and thus makes the roads dry. On the other hand, in Switzerland, when the cuckoo approaches a town, especially if it enters it, it forebodes rain; and in the Vosges the name of "neige du coucou" is given to the snow which frequently whitens the mountain tops after the first note of the bird has been heard; and in Canton Vaud they call the cold weather which often prevails in April "la Rebuse du coucou." A Welsh proverb runs,

"The first week of May
Frights the cuckoo away,"—

and the Germans declare that by that time his voice is frozen; a change of voice to which Heywood alludes in his epigram "Of Use," 1587,—

"In Aprill, the koocoo can sing her song by rote,
In June, of tune, she cannot sing a note;
At first, koo-coo, koo-coo, sing still can she do,
At last, kooke, kooke, kooke; six kookes to one koo."

In the Basses Alpes it is believed that if the cuckoo sings in the direction of the north, there will be rain the next day; if in the south, fine weather (Rolland).

*b.* The cuckoo as prognosticating the harvest.

In Germany and Switzerland, if the cuckoo sings after S. John's day, the vintage will be bad and the harvest scanty. In Norway, if it continued to utter its call after it had seen the first hayrick [cf. 3. (1)], it foretold coming famine, or hard times at least.

The Norfolk country-folk say that if, on the last week before he goes, the cuckoo keeps on the top of the oaks and makes a noise, it is the sign of a good harvest, but if he keeps on the lower branches, it is a bad sign. This mention of the oaks reminds us of Hesiod's statements that "when the cuckoo sings among the oak trees it is time to plough"; and "that if it should happen to rain three days together when the cuckoo sings among the oak trees, then late sowing will be as good as early sowing." In the "Bath Papers" (v. 266), so Mr. Hardy tells us, a Norwich farmer writes as follows: "The present appearance for the greatest appearance of barley is from the seed sown on the earliest sound of the cuckoo, and while the buds of blackthorn were yet turgid." In some districts the following proverb is much used:—

"Cuckoo oats and woodcock hay
Make a farmer run away,"

which means (*Notes and Queries*, Ser. III., v. 450) "that if the spring is so backward that the oats cannot be sown till the cuckoo is heard, or the autumn so wet that the latter-math crop of hay cannot be gathered in till the woodcocks come over, the farmer is sure to suffer great loss." In Norfolk there is a saying called "the Wilby warning," frequently quoted by labourers, to this effect,—

"When the weirling shrieks at night,
Sow the seed with the morning light,
But 'ware when the cuckoo swells its throat,
Harvest flies from the mooncall's note."

Here "the mooncall" is probably the nightingale. In the Gironde the country-folk say,

"Quand lou cocut ben aux arbres deshuillat
Il y a petit de paille, et beaucoup de blat"

(*i.e.* 'When the cuckoo comes to bare trees, there will be little straw an much grain'). This corresponds with the English proverb given by Ray,—

"When the cuckoo comes to the bare thorn,
Sell your cow and buy you corn;
But when she comes to the full bit,
Sell your corn and buy you sheep."

So the Welsh—

"Os cân y gôg a'r berth yn llwm, *i.e.* 'If the cuckoo sings when the hedge is brown,
Gwerth dy Geffyl a phryn dy bwn. Sell thy horse and buy thy corn.
Os cân y gôg a'r berth yn glyd, If the cuckoo sings when the hedge is green,
Cadw dy Geffyl a gwerth dy yd." Keep thy horse and sell thy corn.'

The Servian *haiduks*, however, according to Grimm (ii. 679), declare that "it betokens evil when the cuckoo comes too soon and cries out of the black (leafless) forest; and good luck when it sings from the green wood." But as regards the French and English sayings, *they* appear to refer not so much to the early arrival of the cuckoo, as to the lateness of the spring, which the Servians also consider as beneficial to their crops.

"When the cuckoo purls its feathers, the housewife should become chary of her eggs," is recorded by Mr. Hardy as a popular saying; and seems to mean that when the bird's feathers become ruffled and awry, it is a sign of approaching cold.

(3) We have already noticed the connection of the cuckoo with Freya as the divinity of spring, germinating showers, sunshine, and harvest; but besides giving fruitfulness to the earth, this goddess also imparts to men a long life, prosperity, and the joy of marriage, with its fruit—a numerous offspring. Hence it is that the cuckoo is invoked by those desirous of knowing how long they will have to live, how soon they will be married, and with how many children they will be blessed.

*a.* The cuckoo as prognosticating length of life.

It was a custom in Yorkshire (Hardy, 41) for children to sing round a cherry tree—

"Cuckoo, cherry tree,
Come down and tell me
How many years afore I dee."

And in Northamptonshire—

"Cuckoo, cherry tree,
How many years am I to live?
One, two, three."

Each child then shook the tree, and the number of cherries which fell betokened the sum of the years of its future life. This agrees with what Grimm (ii. 679) says, that "when the cuckoo has eaten his fill of cherries three times he leaves off singing." So, too, in the west of Scotland, "the cuckoo, the first time you hear it in spring, cries once for every year you have yet to live." (*Glasgow Herald*, Oct. 1859.)

A similar superstition exists in France, where in Franche Comté the bird is thus addressed—

"Cuccou,
Bolotou,
Regaide sur ton grand livre,
Comben i a d'enées è vivre."

(Bolotou means a boy who robs birds' nests in order to make a meal off the eggs they contain. So the cuckoo is called in Northants "suck-egg."—Sternberg's "Northamptonshire Glossary," 109.)

In Switzerland the children cry—

"Guggu, ho, ho,
Wie lang leben i no?"

In Westphalia—

"Kukuk vam Heaven
Wu lang sall ik noch leaven?"

to which, in Ditmarschen, are added the lines—

"Sett dy in de gröne Grastyt
Un tell myn Jaerstyt."

(*i.e.* 'Set thee in the green grass-tide and tell my year's tide.')
In Lauenburg—

| | |
|---|---|
| "Kukuk, | 'Cuckoo, |
| Spekbuk, | Fat-paunch, |
| Ik bir dy: | I pray thee: |
| Seg my doch, | Tell me now, |
| Wo vael Joer | How many years |
| Läw 'ik noch." | I yet shall live.' |

(The last two are from Thorpe iii. 131.)

In Swabia—

"Kukuk, kukuk,
Schrei mir meine Jahre an.
Schrei mir sie in 'n Deckelkräbe (basket)
Wie viel Jahr darf ich noch lebe."

In some districts the rhyme runs, according to Grimm (ii. 676)—

"Kukuk, beckenknecht (*vid. inf.*)
Sag mir recht,
Wie viel jar ich leben soll."

So, too, in modern Greek we have, *κοῦκο μου, κοῦκάκι μου, κι ἀργυροκουκάκι μου, πόσους χρόνους θὲ νὰ ζήσω;*

In Sweden they say—

| | |
|---|---|
| "Göker grå, | 'Cuckoo grey, |
| Saeg mig då, | Tell me now, |
| Uppå gvist, | Up on bough, |
| Sant och vist, | True and sure, |
| Hur många år | How many years |
| Jag leva får?" | I have to live?' |

The same belief prevails in Poland and Bohemia (Grimm ii. 679), and in one of the old French poems of the cycle of "Renard the Fox," we find it existing in France in the thirteenth century. ("Le Roman du Renart," tom. iv. p. 9, v. 216, quoted by Rolland, p. 93.)

*b.* The cuckoo has also the reputation of being able to tell maidens how many years they will remain unmarried. In England he is invoked with the lines—

"Cuckoo, cherry tree,
Good bird, tell me
How many years I shall be
Before I get married."

In France (Rolland, p. 94) the young girls salute the bird thus—

"Coucou des villes
Coucou des bois
Combé ai z'y d'années
A me maria?"

In Holstein the question is—

"Kukuk achter de Hecken
Wo lang schall min Brut noch gaen de bleken?"

The answer to which is considered to be given directly the bird utters his harsh second note (or as they call it in Berwickshire, his "muck it out") once between his usual cry. As many times as he has called "cuckoo" up to this, so many years will the inquirer remain celibate. (Busch, 203.)

In Oldenburg the girls ask, directly they hear the first call of the bird—

"Kukuk in den Sunnenschein
Wo lange schall ick Jumfer sin?"

This belief is general throughout Germany. When the cuckoo is first heard in spring the young maidens interrogate him with the same rhymes that were quoted above ("Göker grå," etc.), altering the last line into

Jag ogift går? *i.e.*, I shall ungiven go?

If he cries oftener than ten times they say he sits on a bewitched bough, and give no heed to his prophecies.

In connection with this may be mentioned the reason, as given in Denmark according to Mr. Horace Marryat ("Jutland and the Danish Isles," i. 270), why the cuckoo builds no nest of his own.—"When, in early springtime, the voice of the cuckoo is first heard in the woods, every village girl kisses her hand, and asks the question, 'Cuckoo! Cuckoo! when shall I be married?' and the old folks, borne down with age and rheumatism, inquire, 'Cuckoo! when shall I be released from this world's care?' The bird, in answer, continues singing 'Cuckoo!' as many times as years will elapse before the object of their desires will come to pass. But as some old people live to an advanced age, and many girls die old maids, the poor bird has so much to do in answering the questions put to her, that the building season goes by; she has no time to make her nest, but lays her egg in that of the hedgesparrow." In Bohemia they say that the Festival of the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin used always to be held sacred even by animals; and the birds left off building their nests on that day. The cuckoo, however, was an exception; she was therefore cursed and deprived of her husband. Hence it is that she has no nest of her own, but lays her eggs in that of a linnet or hedgesparrow. (Grohmann, 68.)

*c.* Grimm ("D.M.," ii. 677) informs us that in Goethe's "Oracle of Spring" the cuckoo announces to a fond couple their approaching marriage, and the number of their children—which is also a Bohemian superstition.

(4) Superstitions connected with the hearing of the cuckoo's first call.

*a.* "In the maritime Highlands and Hebrides," says McGillivray, "about the time of the arrival of the wheatear, every one is on the look-out for the cuckoo. Both birds are great favourites with the Celts, more especially the latter; but both may be the harbingers of evil as well as of good, for should the wheatear be first seen on a stone, or the cuckoo first heard by *one who has not broken his fast*, some misfortune may be expected. Indeed, besides the danger, it is considered a reproach to one to have heard the cuckoo while hungry, and of such a one it continues to be said that the bird has muted on him, 'chac a chuaig an.' But should the wheatear be seen on a turf, or on the grass, or should the cuckoo be heard when one has prepared himself by replenishing his stomach, all will go well." In France, to hear the cuckoo for the first time fasting is believed to make the hearer an idle do-nothing for the rest of the year (Périgord), or to numb his limbs for the same period (Canton de Loulay), and it is said of such a one that "le coucou l'a-t-attrappé!" So in Somersetshire (*N. and Q.*, Ser. V., vol. iii., p. 424), "When boys first hear

the cuckoo they run away as fast as they can, & prevent their being lazy all the year after." In Germany the belief is that to hear the bird's cry before a meal entails constant hunger for the next twelve months; while in Denmark (Thorpe ii. 271), if a person sees the cuckoo for the first time in this same condition, it is said, "The cuckoo befools us." If it is a male person, he shall not find any cattle or anything else he may seek after. If it is a girl, she must be on her guard against young men, lest she be befooled by them. If it is old folks, they have good reason to fear sickness." In Norway, if the maidens hear the bird sing before breakfast it is considered an evil omen ("Cambridge Antiquarian Communications," iv. 159).

*b.* Importance, too, is attached to the quarter or direction in which the cuckoo utters his first call. Thus, in Cornwall ("Choice Notes," p. 90), "If, on first hearing the cuckoo, the sounds proceed from the right, it signifies that you will be prosperous; or, to use the language of the informant, a country lad, "You will go right vore in the world"; if from the left, ill luck is before you. On the other hand, Mr. Pengelly says (Hardy, 42), "Cornishmen not only take it as a good omen to hear the cuckoo from the right, but also from before them; to hear him, in short, on the 'starboard bow,' as a sailor would say." Mr. Eirikr Magnusson, in his "Description of a Norwegian Calendar" ("Cambridge Antiquarian Communications," iv. 159), tells us that if the cuckoo was heard on May 1st in the north, it was a *nágaukr*, 'death cuckoo,' and boded the hearer death; if in the south, it was a *saagaukr*, 'seed cuckoo,' and foretold good luck to harvest; if in the west, it was a *vilgaukr*, 'will-cuckoo,' signifying that the hearer's will and wishes would be fulfilled; if in the east, it was an *astgaukr*, 'guile-cuckoo,' hinting that the hearer's love would be responded to."

*c.* The belief is almost universal in England and the Continent that if a person has money in his pocket when he first hears the cuckoo he will never be in want of it throughout the year. Should he, at the same time, indulge in a wish, it will be gratified, provided it be within reasonable limits, if he turn the coins which he has in his possession (Somerset, Northants, Belgium, Swabia), or jingle them (Westphalia, Carinthia), or roll on the grass (Saxony —see Busch, 203); while in some places it is thought that if, in addition to money, he happen to have a knife with him, he will have good sport for the next twelve months ("Monthly Packet," New Series, vol. xix., p. 413). With regard to this connection of the cuckoo with money, it may be observed that Freya's tears were golden, that gold was named after them, and that Holla, with whom she stands in close relationship, bestowed the gift of weeping such tears—in other words, had the power of granting wealth and fortune.

*d.* Various superstitions.

At Wooler, in Northumberland, you are told, if you are walking on a hard road when the cuckoo first calls, the ensuing season will be full of calamity; but if you should stand on soft ground it is a lucky omen (Hardy, 39).

In Scotland it is lucky to be walking when the cuckoo is first heard, sitting when the first swallow is seen, to see the first foal of the year walking in front of its dam :—

> "Gang and hear the gowk yell,
> Sit and see the swallow flee,
> See the foal afore it's mither's e'e,
> 'Twill be a thriving year with thee."
>
> ("Zoologist," 1094.)

The first time you hear the voice of the cuckoo, sit down on a bank, and, pulling the stocking off the *right* leg, say—

> "May this to me,
> Now lucky be,"

and then put it on again. ("Cuckoo Cries," p. 8. By M. A. Denham.) And Pliny attributes to the earth on which the *right* foot stands when the cuckoo is first heard, the virtue of keeping off fleas : "Aliud est cuculo miraculum, quo quis loco primo audiat illam, si dexter pes circumscribatur, ae vestigium id effodiatur, non gigni pulices, ubicunque spargatur." ("Nat. Hist.," xxx. 25.) In the west of Scotland, on hearing the cuckoo for the first time, pull off your shoes and stockings, and, if you find a hair on the sole of the *left* foot, it will be the exact colour of the hair of your future spouse. If no hair is found, then another year of single life must be endured" (*Glasgow Herald*, October, 1859). "I got up the last May morning," says the "Connoisseur," No. 56, "and went into the fields to hear the cuckoo, and when I pulled off my *left* shoe I found a hair in it exactly the same colour with his."

"When first the year, I heard the cuckoo sing,
And call with welcome note the budding spring,
I straightway set a-running with such haste,
Deb'rah that won the smock scarce ran so fast,
Till spent for lack of breath, quite weary grown,
Upon a rising bank I sat adown,
And doff'd my shoe, and by my troth I swear,
Therein I spied this yellow frizzled hair,
As like to Lubberkin's in curl and hue,
As if upon his comely pate it grew.
With my sharp heel I three times mark the ground,
And turn me thrice, around, around, around—"

writes Gay, in his "Shepherd's Week" (Pastoral iv.) ; and the same superstition prevails in Ireland, only in that country it is believed that the hair must be sought for under the *right* foot. (Carleton, "Traits, etc., of the Irish Peasantry," vol. iv., p. 268.)

In some of the north-western counties, and also in Norfolk (Hardy, 44), people believe that whatever they chance to be doing when they first hear the cuckoo they will do all the year. In Berwickshire, if the circumstances in which its note is first heard be attended to, they afford unerring signs whereby the secrets of a man's destiny for the ensuing year may be disclosed. In whatever direction he may be looking when its tones arrest him, there will he be on the anniversary of that day next year. If he be gazing on the ground, he is warned of an untimely fate. This is also common to Midlothian and Cornwall. (Hardy, 44.)

To hear the cuckoo's first note when in bed betokens, so they say in Norfolk and also in Sussex, illness or death to the hearer or one of his family. ("Norf. Arch. Orig. Pap." ii. 301).

In Westphalia (Busch, 203) the peasants, on hearing the cuckoo for the first time, roll over and over on the grass, and by so doing insure themselves against lumbago for the rest of the year. This is considered all the more likely to happen if the bird repeat his cry while they are on the ground.

(5) The monotony of the cuckoo's song is proverbial. A "cuckoo tune" is to harp on one string, to weary by iteration. Mr. Hardy (p. 27) says that it early became a proverb in Scotland that "the goik hes na sang but ane." In Ferguson's "Scots Proverbs," cited in Dean Ramsay's "Reminiscences," we have it "Ye bried of (take after) the gowk, ye have not a rhyme but ane" ; but the more modern saying is, "Ye're like the cuckoo, ye have but one song," which is a parallel to the German "Du singest immer einen Gesang, wie der Guckguck." So the French declare that the cuckoo is so proud of himself that he can do nothing but repeat his own name ; and in East Friesland the children have a rhyme,

"Kukuk, Breebuuk
Röppt sien eegen Naam ut,"

used when one of them indulges in silly boasting talk. In Tennyson's "Lover's Tale" occurs the passage :—

"We loved
The sound of one another's voices more,
Than the grey cuckoo loves his name."

While in North Germany the country boys and girls say that

"Ein Kuckuck sprach mit einer Staar
Der aus dem Stadt entflohen war,"

and asked what people thought of the nightingale. "The whole town is praising her," said the starling. "And the lark?" "Half the city are talking of her." "The blackbird?" "I have heard a few say that they admire him." "Well, what do they say of me?" "I never heard your name mentioned." "Then," said the cuckoo, "I must praise myself. Cuckoo!"

There are many legends to account for the bird's cry. The Germans say that he is a bewitched baker or miller boy, and thus has pale or meal-coloured feathers. In a dear season he robbed poor folks of their dough, and, when God blessed the dough in the oven, drew it out, plucked some off, and every time cried out as he did so, "Gukuk"! ('Look, look.') He was therefore punished and turned into a thievish bird who continually repeats this cry. This is why he is called *Beckerknecht* in Germany; though another legend (Grimm, ii. 729) also connects the two together. "Christ was passing a baker's shop, when He smelt the new bread, and sent His disciples to ask for a loaf. The baker refused, but the baker's wife and her six daughters were standing apart, and secretly gave it. For this they were set in the sky as the Seven-stars, while the baker became the cuckoo (baker's man), and so long as he sings in spring, from St. Tiburtius's day (April 14th) to St. John's (June 24th), the Seven-stars are visible in heaven." Compare with this the Norwegian tale of Gertrude's bird (see "Green Woodpecker," ii. 1), which is so similar that it makes us ask with Simrock ("Handbuch der Deutschen Mythologie," pp. 504, 505), Was the cuckoo itself the Gertrude's bird (Gertrude being the representative of Freya and Iduna)? and has the latter been considered the red-headed woodpecker only through confusion with the Martin's bird (St. Martin and St. Gertrude being both connected with death and burial)? This is the more likely, as the point of the story lies in the baking, and the woman's red hood is only thrown in as an accessory because of the bird's colour, whilst there was no necessity to invent the grey mealy plumage of the cuckoo.

The Bohemians take the cuckoo for a transformed peasant woman who hid herself when she saw the Lord Jesus approaching, lest she should be obliged to give him a loaf. After He had gone by she put her head out of the window and cried "Cuckoo!" whereupon she was at once changed into that bird. (Grohmann, 68.) Another legend connecting the cuckoo with the hoopoe will be found under the latter bird, p. 108, 109. They also say that she is a transformed maiden who is calling for her lost brother, or else proclaiming by her cry that he is found. This agrees with the Servian song, which tells how the spirit of a dead man was detained in misery on earth because his sister was perpetually weeping at his grave. At last he became angry at her unreasonable sorrow, and cursed her; whereupon she was immediately changed into a cuckoo (Kukavitza), and now she has enough to do to lament for herself. Albanian folk-lore supplies us with more details. There were once two brothers and a sister. The latter accidentally killed one of them, by getting up suddenly from her needlework and piercing him to the heart with her scissors. She and the surviving brother mourned so much that they were turned into birds; he cries out to the lost brother by night, "Gjon, Gjon," and she by day "Ku Ku, Ku-Ku," which means "Where are you?" (J. A. Farrer, "Primitive Manners and Customs."

The Norwegian children say the cock, the cuckoo, and the blackcock bought a cow between them, and settled that whichever of them woke first in the

morning should have the cow. The cock woke first, and called out, "Now the cow's mine! now the cow's mine! Hurrah!" This woke up the cuckoo, who sang, "Half cow! Half cow!" Then the blackcock woke—"A like share! A like share! dear friends, that's only fair!" So they were no wiser than they were before! (Dasent, "Norse Tales," p. 211.)

The old Sclavonians (Grimm. ii. 679) believed that Zywie (*zywy* = alive), the ruler of the universe, used to change himself into a cuckoo, and declare to men the number of years they had to live. (See above, 3 *a*).

(6) The most remarkable trait in the character of the cuckoo is its confiding the charge of hatching its eggs and rearing its young to some other bird, always much smaller than itself. In Scotland (M'Gillivray, *sub* Cuckoo) the species on which it thus imposes its progeny is generally the meadow pipit (*Anthus pratensis*); in England its eggs have been found in the nests of the hedgesparrow, redbreast, whitethroat, redstart, willow warbler, pied wagtail, meadow pipit, skylark, yellowhammer, chaffinch, greenfinch, and linnet; those of the hedgesparrow, pied wagtail, and meadow pipit being usually selected. The Border shepherds (Hardy, 24) declare that the blame for this apparently unnatural alienation of the parent from her offspring does not attach to the female, but is really attributable to the male, who, if he had his way, would devour the eggs and drive his partner from the nest. To avoid this she conveys the egg out of his reach and deposits it in the home of some other bird.

It is this depositing its offspring with alien parents that has given rise to the connection between the cuckoo and cuckoldom. Originally, among the Hindūs for instance (Gubernatis ii. 231), the male cuckoo was considered the faithless one, as they believed that it entered into an alliance with the strange female bird to which it afterwards confided the eggs. Later on, amongst the Romans, the derisive title "Curruca" was given to the paramour of the guilty wife (that being the name of the bird in whose nest the cuckoo's eggs were usually deposited); while afterwards, in the transition from classic to mediæval periods, the application of the term cocu or cuckold was transferred from the paramour to the unsuspicious husband.

(7) The meadow pipit (*Anthus pratensis*—which see) is the cuckoo's constant companion in Ireland, Scotland, and the north of England. In Devon and Cornwall the peasantry believe (*Gentleman's Magazine* for 1796, p. 117) "that the cuckoo feeds on the eggs of other birds, and that the *little bird*, as they call it, accompanying him (the *Yunx torquilla*, wryneck or summer bird) searches for them for that purpose, and feeds him." This is entirely erroneous, as the wryneck gets its names of "cuckoo's mate, marrow, maiden," etc., not from any fondness for the cuckoo's society, but because it arrives and departs about the same time as that bird. Its Swedish name is *Göktita*. Mr. Broderip, in his "Zoological Recreations," p. 75, says that in Herefordshire the red-backed shrike (*Lanius collurio*) is called "cuckoo's maid" probably because it has been seen feeding a young cuckoo. In North Germany the hoopoe has the name of the "cuckoo's clerk or sexton," pointing, as Grimm observes, ("D. M." ii. 681) to old heathen traditions now lost, the hoopoe, by the way, being frequently connected with the cuckoo in folk tales (see Hoopoe, p. 109), both being birds that were thought to have received their forms by metamorphosis. The peewit or lapwing is also called in Germany the "cuckoo's lackey."

(8) In the north of England and in Scotland, to send a person on a fruitless errand on the first of April is called a "gowk's errand." Sometimes (Hardy, 39) the April fool is the bearer of a missive containing this distich—

> "The first and second day of April,
> Hound (or hunt or send) the gowk another mile."

The reply by parties too old or too experienced to be thus played on is—

> "April gowks are past and gone,
> You're a fool and I am none."

At Wooler, in Northumberland, those who thus resisted being made "feul gowks" on "feul-gowk day," April 1st, replied :—

"The gowk and the titlene sit on a tree,
Ye're a gowk as weel as me."

It seems likely that this phrase is derived from the habit the cuckoo has of changing its place so quietly and suddenly. Frequently, when children are anxious to catch a sight of the bird, and think that they are almost within reach of it, they hear its cry at a distance, and follow it, only to be again deceived. It is in this character of a derider that, as Gubernatis remarks (ii. 233), when "children play at hide-and-seek, they are accustomed in Germany and Italy, as well as in England, to cry out "Cuckoo" to him who is to seek them, in vain, as is hoped."

Young cuckoos are stupid creatures, and from this trait in their nature may come the terms "gowk," a simpleton, and "gawky," the corresponding adjective. Grimm ("D. M," ii 681) points out that as far back as the tenth century *gouh* has the meaning of fool, and Gauchsberg is equivalent to Narrenberg ('fool's mount'). Animals whose stupidity was proverbial of old are the ox, ass, ape, goat, goose, gowk and jay. See Hardy (26, 27) for an amusing anecdote as to the signification of a gowk's nest, quoted from Constable's *Edinburgh Magazine*, September 1817.

(9) The cuckoo has given his name to many plants ; the real cuckoo flower being *Cardamine pratensis*, so called from its coming into bloom when the bird first begins to call. Other cuckoo flowers are the *Lychnis flosculi*, the *Lychnis diurna*, or red-flowered campion, the cuckoo-pint (*Arum maculatum*), the hare-bell, the *Orchis mascula*, and others. The wood-sorrel has the name of cuckoo bread, "because the cuckowes delight to feed thereon," and this is common to many languages. In French it is *pain de coucou* ; in Italian, *pan cuculi* ; in German, *Kukuksbrot* ; in Danish. *giöge-syre* ; in England, besides cuckoo-bread, it is called cuckoo-spice ; in Scotland, gowk's meat. (For an exhaustive list of flower lore connected with the cuckoo, see Hardy, 32-5.)

The froth on plants, discharged by young frog-hoppers (*Pytelus spumarius*), is the cuckoo's or gowk's spittle, frog spit, toad spit, snake's spit, or wood-sear of England and Scotland ; the *Kukuks-* or *Hexenspeichel* of the Germans ; the Swiss *guggerspeu*, Danish *giögespyt*, Norwegian *trold-Kiäringspye*, French *crachat de coucou*. In Devonshire, boys take the insects in the spittle for cuckoos in their early stage ; and Jonston, in his "History of the Wonderful Things of Nature," p. 174, tells us that the grasshoppers (for so he considered them to be, following Isidore) "before the dog dayes when they hear the cuckowe sing, run upon her in troops (it is to be remembered that they are her offspring), and get under her wings and kill her." (For an account of the part the cuckoo spittle played in the trials of the famous "Witches of Blockula," see Broderip, "Zoological Recreations," p. 72.)

(10) In the ancient pharmacopœia the cuckoo was of great use. Being applied to the flesh in a hareskin it caused sleep, while the ashes helped the pain and moisture of the stomach, the epileptic, and those that had agues, being given in the fit. (Lovell's "Panzoologicomineralogia," p. 149.)

(11) Miss Burne ("Shropshire Folk Lore," p. 222) mentions a Shropshire saying, "When it rains and the sun shines, the cuckoo is going to heaven." In Scotland, on the same occasion, children say "that the fairies are baking, and the rain waters their bannocks" (*N. & Q*, Ser. IV., v. 273). In Germany the combination is viewed with much disfavour, for then it is "Kermes in hell," or "poison is falling from the sky," or "the witches are making butter or pancakes," or "the devil is beating his grandmother ; he is laughing, and she is crying."

*Order* STRIGES.

*Family* STRIGIDÆ.

1. The following names are given indiscriminately to owls (A.-S. *úle* = howlers).

Howlet.
Hoolet. Cf. *Hulotte* (France).
Screech owl.
Jenny howlet.

2. The cry of the owl foretells a change, if heard in bad weather. Hence the Italian proverb,

"Quand la sciguèta cria
El temp brüt el scapa via:"

and the Sussex saying, "When owls whoop much at night, expect a fair morrow."

3. Owls are often nailed up on barn doors or walls. The meaning of this custom is now unknown in our own rural districts; but in Germany the peasants will tell you it is done to avert lightning. The owl, it is to be observed, is a lightning bird.

4. The owl a baker's daughter.

The following legend (alluded to by Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, Act IV., sc. v. :—

"They say the owl was a baker's daughter,")

is related by Mr. Staunton, in his edition of Shakespeare's Plays. "Our Saviour went into a baker's shop where they were baking, and asked for some bread to eat. The mistress of the shop immediately put a piece of dough into the oven to bake for him, but was reprimanded by her daughter, who, insisting that the piece of dough was too large, reduced it considerably in size. The dough, however, immediately afterwards began to swell, and presently became of an enormous size. Whereupon the baker's daughter cried out, 'Wheugh! wheugh! wheugh!' which owl-like noise. it is said, probably induced our Saviour, for her wickedness, to transform her into that bird." Mr. Waterton says his nursery maid used to sing two stanzas of an ode which gave to the bird a nobler origin :—

"Once I was a monarch's daughter,
And sat on a lady's knee:
But am now a nightly rover,
Banished to the ivy tree.

"Crying hoo hoo, hoo hoo, hoo hoo,
Hoo! hoo! hoo! my feet are cold!
Pity me, for here you see me,
Persecuted, poor and old!"

(So in Haute Bretagne the peasants say that when "chouette" cries, 'c'est qu'elle a fret ès pieds.) While Mr. Nuttall declares that the north-country nurses made her out to be no less than the daughter of Pharaoh, and sang

> "Oh! ŏ ŏ ŏ o ō, —
> I once was a king's daughter, and sat on my father's knee,
> But now I'm a poor hoolet, and hide in a hollow tree!"

In several German popular songs the owl laments that she is alone, and deserted in the forest. One tradition represents her as an old weaver spinning with silver threads.

5. *a.* A Breton legend (Luzel, "Rapports sur une mission en Bretagne," 4ième rapport, p. 203), gives the following reason for the nocturnal and solitary habits of the owl. "Once upon a time all the birds gave each of them one of their feathers to the wren, who had lost his own; the owl alone refused to take part in this act of charity. 'I,' he said, 'will never give up a single feather: the winter is coming on, and I fear the cold.' 'Very well,' replied the king: 'thou, O owl! from this day forward shalt be the most wretched of birds: thou shalt always be shivering with cold, thou shalt never leave thy abode but by night, and if thou art daring enough to show thyself in the daytime the other birds shall pursue and persecute thee unsparingly.' And from that time the owl has never ceased to cry 'Hou! hou!' as if he were nearly dead with cold."

*b.* In "L'Artiste," Ser. III., vol. ii., p. 300, the tale is presented in another form. "It was necessary for a messenger to fetch fire from heaven to earth; and the wren, weak and delicate though he was, cheerfully undertook to perform the perilous mission. The brave little bird nearly lost his life in the undertaking, for during his flight, the fire scorched away all his plumage, and penetrated to the down. Struck with such unselfish devotion, the other birds, with one accord, each presented the wren with one of their feathers, to cover his bare and shivering skin. The owl alone, in philosophic disdain, stood aloof, and refused to honour, even with such a trifling gift, an act of heroism of which he had not been the performer. But this cruel insensibility excited against him the anger of the other birds to such a pitch that they refused from that time to admit him into their society. And so he is compelled to keep aloof from them during the day, and only when night comes on does he dare to leave his melancholy hiding-place." Another reason for the owl's love of night is given by Wolf ("Beitr. zur D. M.," ii. 438). "The birds, wishing to procure for themselves a king, determined that whichever of them could fly the highest should be selected. The eagle had succeeded in the task, but when he was tired, the wren, who had perched on his tail, rose up and flew yet higher. For this deceit he was confined in a mousehole, and the owl appointed to guard the entrance. But whilst the other birds were taking counsel as to the punishment to be inflicted, the owl went to sleep and the prisoner escaped. Never since has the owl dared to appear in the daytime." (See above, under Wren, p. 36).

### 6. Public-house sign. The owl in the ivy-bush.

A bush of ivy was supposed to be a favourite place for the owl to rest in. The old dramatists abound in allusions to this: *e.g.*

> "And, like an owle, by night to go abroad,
> Roosted all day within an ivy tod." (Drayton.)

In a masque of Shirley's, entitled *The Triumph of Peace*, 1633, one of the scenes represented a wild, woody landscape, "a place fit for purse taking," where "in the furthest part was seene an ivy-bush, out of which came an owle." (Hotten's "History of Signboards," p. 223.)

An old Puritan divine likens an Episcopalian priest to an owl in an ivy-bush in the following terms:—

"For you plainly may see
The owl's ivy signifieth his library,
By which the bush blinded all the dark angels (church clergy)
with the black evil,
That they do not know the true God from the false devil."

7. Proverbial sayings.

"You bring owls to Athens"—*i.e.*, "carrying coals to Newcastle."
"An ass is the gravest beast, the owl the gravest bird."
"The owl is not accounted the wiser for living retiredly."
"The owl thinks all her young ones beautiful."
"Owl light," in the old writers, was equivalent to twilight; so Taylor, water-poet, says—

"When straight we all leap'd over-boord in haste,
Some to the knees, and some up to the waste,
Where sodanely 'twixt owlelight and the darke
We pluck'd the boat beyond high-water marke."

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*Genus* STRIX.

## BARN OWL (*Strix flammea*).

1. So called from its predilection for building in barns, churches, ruins, etc.; whence also

Church owl (Craven).
Cf. *Hibou d'église* (France).

2. From the snowy whiteness of the under plumage and the light tawny yellow of the upper parts are derived the names of

White hoolet or White owl (General).
Silver owl (Forfar).
Yellow owl.

The Gaelic term for this bird is *Caillach-oidhche gheal*="white old woman of the night."

3. The barn owl is known by its shrill screech in the night and prolonged hiss in the daytime; hence

Hissing owl.
Screech owl (General).

A term also, but improperly, applied to the tawny owl (*Syrnium aluco*).

Roarer (Borders).

4. Familiar names.

Billy wix (Norfolk).
Jenny howlet (North Riding).
Madge howlet (Norfolk).
Padge, Pudge, or Pudge owl (Leicestershire).

5. Also called

Woolert, Oolert, or Owlerd (Salop).
Hoolet (Lowlands).
Hulote, or Hullat (Orkney Isles).
Cherubim.
Povey (Gloucestershire).
Hobby owl (Northants).
Gill howter (Cheshire; Norfolk).

From A.-S. *jil* = *noctua*.

In Shropshire the young birds are called Gilly owlets.

6. The screech owl as a messenger of death.

The common consent of all nations has decided that it is a bird of evil omen. In the twelfth book of the "Æneid," previous to the end of the combat between Æneas and Turnus, no sooner does Juturna hear its boding cry and see the flapping wings, than she despairingly utters—

"alarum verbera nosco
Letalemque sonum."

Ovid, too, speaks, in the fifth book of the "Metamorphoses," of

"Ignavus bubo, dirum mortalibus omen."

So too in France, in Germany, in Italy, in England, its appearance forebodes misfortune, its shriek foretells woe and ill. Even in Borneo the scream of an owl, if heard at night previous to going out to the jungle, is considered to be "a sign that sickness will follow if the design be pursued; and if its screech be heard in front of a party on the war path, it is an evil sign, and they must return" (St. John, "Life in the Forests of the Far East," i. 202).

"In China," says Mr. Doolittle ("Social Life of the Chinese," quoted by Dennys, "Folk-lore of China," p. 35), "some say that its voice resembles the voice of a spirit or demon calling out to its fellow. Perhaps it is on account of this notion that they so often assert having heard the voice of a spirit, when they may have heard only the indistinct hooting of a distant owl. Sometimes, the Chinese say, its voice sounds much like an expression for '*digging' the grave.* Hence, probably, the origin of a common saying, that when one is about to die, in the neighbourhood will be heard the voice of an owl, calling out '*dig, dig.*' It is frequently spoken of as 'the bird which calls for the soul, or which catches or takes away the soul.' Some assert that if its cry is dull and indistinct, as though proceeding from a distant place, it betokens the death of a near neighbour; whereas, if its notes are clear and distinct, as if proceeding from a short distance, it is a sure harbinger of the death of a person in a remote neighbourhood,—the more distinct the voice, the more distant the individual whose decease is indicated, and the more indistinct the voice, the nearer the person whose death is certain! It is a common saying that this bird is a transformation of one of the servants of

the ten kings of the infernal regions—*i.e.*, is a devil under the guise of a bird. It is also frequently referred to as 'A constable from the dark land.'"

## 7. The owl as connected with birth.

An ancient belief prevailed in England that if an owl appeared at a birth, it foreboded ill luck to the infant. Shakespeare alludes to this (*Henry VI.*, Part III., Act V. sc. vi.), where the King, addressing Gloucester, says—"The owl shrieked at thy birth, an evil sign."

In the south of France there is an idea that if an owl shrieks when perched on the chimney of a house in which "une femme enceinte" lies, the child will be a girl. Others say that its cry near a village shows that a birth will soon take place in one of the dwellings. In Berne it is believed that the screech of an owl foretells either the birth of a child or the death of a man.

## 8. The owl in magic.

No witch's charm could be efficacious, unless an owl, or a portion of an owl, was an ingredient. Horace's witch, Canidia, used its plumage in her incantation ("Epod. Lib." ode v.):—

> "Et uncta turpis ova ranæ sanguine,
> Plumamque nocturnæ strigis."

Ovid, too, mentions it, referring to the potion prepared by Medea. And among our own poets Ben Jonson, in his *Masque of Queenes*, sings how

> "The screech owl's eggs and the feathers black,
> The blood of the frog and the bone in his back,
> I have been getting, and made of his skin
> A purset, to keep Sir Cranion in."

While the witches in *Macbeth* were careful to introduce the "owlet's wing" into the bubbling caldron. (Act IV., sc. i.)

## 9. The owl as the bird of wisdom.

"The owl was sacred to Athēnē, the goddess of wisdom, because she sees in darkness: the flight of the bird of night was, therefore, for the Athenians, a sign that the goddess who protected their city was propitious." Longfellow has a good word to say for him, in "Hyperion": "The owl is a grave bird—a monk who chants midnight mass in the great temple of nature—an anchorite—a pillar saint—a very Simon Stylites of his neighbourhood": and who does not remember Tennyson's lines—

> "Alone and warming his five wits,
> The white owl in the belfry sits"?

It is true that the five wits were generally considered to be equivalent to the five senses; so

> "I comforte the wyttys five,
> The tastying, smelling and herynge,
> I refresh the sighte and felynge,
> To all creatures alyve."
> (*Fyve Elements*: an Interlude.)

But in his 141st Sonnet Shakespeare distinguishes between wits and senses:—

> "But my five wits nor my five senses can
> Dissuade one foolish heart from serving thee"—

the five wits being, according to Staunton, "common wit, imagination, fantasy, estimation, memory": and who would deny an owl the possession of these? (It may be noticed that the five wits, or five senses, are illustrated in Bunyan's allegory of "The Holy War"; and in the "Ancien Riwle" the heart's wardens are the five wits—sight and hearing, tasting and smelling, and the feeling of every limb.)

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*Family* ASIONIDÆ.

*Genus* ASIO.

## LONG-EARED OWL (*Asio otus*).

1. So called from the elongated tufts of feathers on its head; whence also the names

Long-ears (Berks).
Horn-coot.
Horned owl.

Cf. *Choue cornerotte* (France), *Horneule* (Germany).

Hornie oolet, or hoolet (Stirling; East Lothian).

2. Superstitions respecting the long-eared owl.

"In Sicily," says M. Gubernatis, vol. ii., p. 249. "the horned owl (the horned moon), jacobu, or chiovu, or chiò, is especially feared. The horned owl sings near the house of a sick man three days before his death; if there are no sick people in the house, it announces to one at least of its inhabitants that he or she will be struck with squinancy of the tonsil. The peasants in Sicily, when in spring they hear the lamentation of the horned owl for the first time, go to their master to give notice of their intention of leaving his service; whence the proverb—

"Quannu canta lu chiò
Cu' avi patruni, tinta canciar lu pò."

An omelette made of this bird's eggs is believed in Belgium to be a remedy for drunkenness.

3. Folk lore.

In the neighbourhood of Bordeaux, the country-people throw a pinch of salt into the fire on hearing the cry of this bird, to counteract any evil effects it might portend. (Vicomte de Métivier, p. 433.)

4. The long-eared owl in Christian art.

A bas-relief in the church of Puypéroux (Charente) represents a long-eared owl crowned, on horseback; holding with one hand the bridle, in the other a lance. Opposed to him is a man having a shield on his left arm, who attacks the owl with a sword. On the ground lie three heads. The warrior's shield is

rounded at one end and pointed at the other; he is clothed in a tunic, reaching just short of the knee. This represents the strife between man and Satan, a subject of continual occurrence in mediæval symbolism. The crowned owl is the prince of darkness, the heads or naked bodies signify souls. (Michon, "Statistique de la Charente," p. 266.)

### SHORT-EARED OWL (*Asio brachyotus*).

Various names.

Hawk owl.

So called from its small head and habit of looking for food during the day.

Mouse hawk.
Moss owl (Forfar)—*i.q.* Mouse owl.
Brown yogle (Shetland Isles).
Grey yogle ,, ,,
Red owl (Dartmoor).

From the pale orange of its under plumage.

Fern owl (Ireland).
Woodcock owl (Berks; Norfolk; Cornwall; Ireland).

Because it comes in October, and leaves in March, with the woodcock.

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*Genus* SYRNIUM.

### TAWNY OWL (*Syrnium aluco*).

1. So called from its reddish-brown colour; whence also

Tawny hooting-owl (Salop).
Brown owl, or brown hoolet.

2. Names given from its hooting cry:—

Ullet, or hoolet.
Jenny howlet.
Billy, or gilly, hooter (Salop).
Hoot owl (Craven).
'Ollering owl (Sussex).
Screech owl.

Improperly applied to this species.

3. From hiding in the woods during the day-time, and reposing in trees, it has received the names

Wood owl.
Ivy owl.
Beech owl.

4. Also called

Ferny hoolet.

Because sometimes it nests in bracken.

The Gaelic name is *cailleach oidhche, i.e.* "old woman of the night."

In the neighbourhood of Chatillon-sur-Seine, according to M. Rolland, it is called *Choue de bois*, or *Choue d'Auvergne*, from the following reason:—"Once upon a time, an Auvergnat, who had lost his way in a dense wood, heard the cry of the Hulotte (the usual name for this bird in France), and thought it was the voice of God (Dieu). So he shouted, 'Mon Dieu! Mon Dieu! I am lost in the forest; help me to get out!' and endeavoured to turn his steps in the direction whence the voice seemed to sound. The bird flew from tree to tree, and drew on the luckless traveller farther and farther, till day dawned, and it ceased its cry." This reminds us of a similar story current, under different forms, in many English counties. One version, taken from *Notes and Queries*, Ser. V., vol. i., p. 433, runs as follows (the scene being Earl Bathurst's park, near Cirencester): "More than fifty years ago, a local 'character,' named Robert Hall, was returning home through the woods late one night, and lost his way. 'Man lost!' shouted the frightened traveller. 'Whoo! whoo!' cried the owl. 'Bobby Hall; lost in the Three Mile Bottom!' replied the man. This went on for hours. The story reached the ears of the townspeople, and 'Bobby Hall' was famous ever after."

5. The night crow. (3 *Henry VI.*, Act. V., sc. vi.; Leviticus xi. 16, Welsh version; the English has "night hawk.")

Pugh, in his Welsh Dictionary (1832), under the word *Delluan*, says that the "corpse bird" (by which name the night crow of Leviticus xi. 16, Welsh version, is known in Wales) is the *Brown owl*. One rhymer wrote of that bird—

"The corpse bird with his dog's nose"—

*i.e.*, its sense of smell is so acute that it scents afar off, as does a dog, the trail of its prey. (*N. and Q.*, Ser. V., vol. i., p. 115.)

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*Genus* BUBO.

## EAGLE OWL (*Bubo ignavus*).

1. So called from its superior size and strength, which rendered it the rival of the royal bird.

Other names are

Stock owl (Orkney Isles).

From its habit of pressing against the stem (stock) of a tree with unruffled feathers, so as to assimilate itself to the stump, and elude notice.

Cat ogle (Orkney Isles).

Norw. *Katugl*—from its similarity in habits and appearance to the cat. They pursue the same prey (mice) by night; and the owl's round white head,

with tufts resembling ears and eyes gleaming bright in the darkness, gives it an additional resemblance to pussy.

The old French name for this bird was "Grand Duc," from a tradition that it "acted twice a year as leader or guide (*duc*) to the flocks of quails at their periods of migration." So the quatrain runs :—

"Le Duc est dit comme le conducteur
D'autres oyseaux, quand d'un lieu se remuent.
Comme Bouffons changent de gestes, et muent,
Ainsi est-il folastre et plaisanteur."

Mr. Broderip tells us that the French falconers turned him out with the appendage of a fox's brush, in order to catch the kite that was sure to fly after him.

2. Folk lore.

When Agrippa, who had fallen into disfavour with Tiberius, was arrested at Capreæ, an eagle owl was sitting on the branches of a tree to which he was tied. A German augur, who was present, thereupon prophesied that he would be released and would become king of the Jews—adding, however, that when he saw that owl again, his death would be near. And so it came to pass ; for, when sitting on his throne in state at Cæsarea (Acts xii. 21), he cast his eyes upwards and beheld an owl perched on one of the cords which ran across the theatre. Recognising the portent of ill, he fell back smitten with disease, and in five days was dead.

Among the Tartars this bird was highly honoured and esteemed, and its feathers worn in their caps to insure success in war. They attributed the preservation of their chief, Genghis Khan, from his enemies, to the fact of an eagle owl settling over the place where he was hiding from his pursuers, who passed by, believing that it would never rest quiet if any man was near. (Broderip, "Zoological Recreations," p. 97.)

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*Order* ACCIPITRES.

*Family* FALCONIDÆ.

*Genus* CIRCUS.

## MARSH HARRIER (*Circus æruginosus*).

1. So called from being generally found in the neighbourhood of bogs and marshes, and from its preying on and destroying (harrying) fish, reptiles and aquatic birds ; whence also

Marsh or Moor hawk ; Moor buzzard.

Cf. *Busard de marais* (France) ; *Rohrweih* (Germany).

Bog gled (East Lothian).
Duck hawk ; Snipe hawk (South of Ireland).

2. Names given to it from its colour.

Dun pickle (Wilts) : obsolete.
Brown hawk (Ireland).

Bald buzzard (Essex).
White-headed harpy.

3. Various names.
Puttock.
Kite (Ireland).

Names improperly applied.

4. Weather prognostic.

It used to be said in Wilts that these birds alighted in numbers on the downs before rain.

## HEN HARRIER (*Circus cyaneus*).

1. Also called "Hen driver," two synonymous titles: for "Harrier," see above, under Marsh harrier.

2. The male of this species is of a greyish-blue colour; hence the names

Blue hawk (East Lothian; Wicklow).
Blue kite (Scotland).

Called in Wales "Barcud-glâs," which has the same meaning.

Blue gled (Scotland).
Blue sleeves (ditto).
Grey buzzard (Hants).
White hawk, or kite (Donegal).
Miller.
White aboon gled (Stirling).

3. The plumage of the female is composed of various shades of dark-brown; hence she is called

Ringtail (East Lothian, where it is applied to both sexes).

From the brown bar on the tail.

Brown kite.
Brown gled (Scotland).

4. Various names.
Faller.
Katabella (Orkney Isles).
Dove hawk.
Sea-gull hawk (Connemara).

Called in France "l'oiseau de Saint Martin," as it makes its passage through that country about November 11th (St. Martin's day).

"In the Hebrides it is said of any one, should he be more than ordinarily fortunate on a certain day, that he must have seen the 'clamhanluch' (from *clamhan*, a hawk, and *luch*, a mouse) or hen harrier." ("Zoologist," 1006.)

*Genus* BUTEO.

**BUZZARD** (*Buteo vulgaris*).—O. F. *Buse, Busard.*

1. Also called

Puddock, or Puttock (Eastern and Midland counties).

A name also applied to the kite; from "poot" (*i.q.* Poult), short for "pullet," and "ock," corruption of "hawk."

Bald kite.
Kite (Ireland).
Goshawk (ditto).
Buzzard hawk (Forfar).
Gled (North Scotland): *i.e.* Glider; from A.-S. *glídan*, to glide.

2. Weather prognostic.

The cry of the buzzard is supposed to foretell rain; so Clare writes:—

"Slow o'er the wood the puttock sails;
And mournful, as the storms arise,
His feeble note of sorrow wails,
To the unpitying, frowning skies."
("Village Minstrel," i. 96.)

3. The saying, "a blind buzzard," or "as blind as a buzzard," does not refer to the bird of that name, which is extremely quick-sighted, but rather to the beetle, from the buzzing sound of its flight. Compare the French expression, "étourdi comme un hanneton." Nares, *sub voc.*, says that all night-moths as well as beetles were thus called familiarly in his childhood.

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*Genus* AQUILA.

**GOLDEN EAGLE** (*Aquila chrysætos*).

1. Also called

Black eagle.
Ringtailed eagle.

So called from the dark-grey tail being barred with brownish-black.

The name Golden eagle seems to have been given from the golden-red tinge of the head and neck, and also from its yellow feet.

2. Nest of the eagle.

Called "aerie," French *aire*, which Littré (deriving from the Low Latin *area*) defines as "surface plane de rocher où l'aigle fait son nid, et par extension, nid des grands oiseaux de proie."

### 3. Sight of the eagle.

The eye of the eagle is so quick that the expression "eagle-eyed" has become proverbial. It was believed that she could gaze upon the sun, undazzled, and compelled her young to stand the test before they were fledged, to prove if they were degenerate or not. Robert Chester refers to this in his "Love's Martyr," p. 118 :

> "She brings her birds being yong into the aire,
> And sets them for to looke on Phœbus light,
> But if their eyes with gazing chance to water,
> Those she accounteth bastards, leaves them quight."

### 4. Rejuvenescence of the eagle.

There is an old legend that when the bird begins to feel advancing age it plunges into the sea or into a fountain, from which it rises with new life and strength. (Spenser, "Faerie Queene," Bk. I., cant. xi., st. 34), writes :

> "At last she saw, where he upstarted brave
> Out of the well wherein he drenchèd lay ;
> As eagle, fresh out of the ocean wave,
> Where he hath lefte his plumes all hory gray,
> And deckt himselfe with fethers youthly gay ;
> Like eyas-hauke up mounts unto the skies,
> His newly budded pineons to assay,
> And marvelles at himselfe, stil as he flies."

S. Damian (Epist. ii., 18, 19) adds that, before immersion, it so places itself in the focus of the sun's rays ("ad circulum solis"), as to set its wings on fire, and in this way to consume the old feathers. Rabbi David ("Comment. Esaiæ," cap. xiv.) adds, that when it delays the operation too long it has not strength to rise from the water, and is frequently drowned.

Albertus Magnus (on the veracious authority of Jorachus and Andelinus) writes as follows : "They say that an old eagle, at the period the young ones are fledged, as soon as she has discovered a clear and copious spring, flies directly upwards even to the third region of the air, which we term the region of meteors, and when she feels warm, so as to be almost burning, suddenly dashing down and keeping her wings drawn back, she plunges into the cold water, which by the astringing of the external cold increases the internal heat. She then rises from the water, flies to her nest, and nestling under the wings of her warm young ones melts into perspiration, and thence with her old feathers she puts off her old age, and is clothed afresh ; but while she undergoes the renovation, she makes prey of her young for food." He adds, "I can only consider this as a miraculous occurrence, since in two eagles which I kept I observed no changes of this sort ; for they were tame and docile, and moulted in the same manner as other birds of prey." This old legend seems to be referred to in Ps. ciii. 5—"making thee young and lusty as an eagle," commenting on which S. Augustine refers to another strange belief—viz., "that since the upper mandible of the eagle's bill, as she becomes old, grows over the under one and prevents its opening, so that the bird can no longer feed, she seeks out a rock or rough stone on which she rubs her beak, and by striking off the obstructive part, recovers her strength and power of feeding."

### 5. The eagle in art.

*a.* The eagle is given to S. John as a symbol of the highest inspiration, "because," as S. Jerome says, "he ascends to the very throne of God."

*b.* It is also the emblem of SS. Bertulph, Medard, and Servatius ; of S. Bertulph, abbot of Rentrey in Flanders, and of S. Medard, bishop of

Noyon, because these saints, when overtaken by storms, were protected by the outspread wings of an eagle; of S. Servatius, bishop of Tongres, because this bird sheltered him from the blazing rays of the sun when sleeping by the wayside.

### 6. The eagle in heraldry.

It is, generally speaking, the symbol of majesty and power. Austria has a two-headed eagle, one for the eastern and one for the western empire; claiming to be the representative of the Cæsars of Rome. The double-headed or imperial eagle is also borne by Russia, who added the kingdom of Poland to her own. The crest of the earls of Derby is an eagle with wings extended, or preying on an infant in a kind of cradle, at its head a sprig of oak, all *proper*. This is derived from the family of Latham, and the following legend is told to account for its origin:—"In the reign of Edward III. Sir Thomas Latham, ancestor of the house of Stanley and Derby, had only one legitimate child, a daughter, but at the same time he had an illegitimate son by a certain Mary Oscatell. This child he ordered to be laid at the foot of a tree on which an eagle had built its nest. Taking a walk with his lady over the estate, he contrived to bring her past this place, pretended to find the boy, took him home, and finally prevailed upon her to adopt him as their son. This boy was afterwards called Sir Oscatell Latham, and considered the heir to the estates. Compunction or other motive, however, made the old nobleman alter his mind and confess the fraud; and at his death the greater part of his fortune was left to his daughter, who afterwards married Sir John Stanley. At the adoption of the child, Sir Thomas had assumed for crest an eagle upon wing regardant; this, out of ill feeling of the Stanley family towards Sir Oscatell, was afterwards altered into an eagle preying upon a child." Unfortunately, as Mr. Picton has pointed out (*Notes and Queries*, Ser. V., v. 2—4), the legend bears absurdity on its face. The eagle bearing a shield, emblazoned or, on a chief indented az. three bezants, is found on a seal of the father of the Sir Thomas to whom the legend attributes it. The legend itself is as old as the time of King Alfred, to whom a similar incident is ascribed.

### 7. Eagle's feathers.

"Eagle's feathers will not lie with any other feathers, but consume them which lie with them" ("The Wedding Garment," Lond. 1614).

### 8. The eagle stone.

This, which was supposed to be found in the nest of an eagle, was red, or black spotted with yellow in colour, and believed to bring good fortune to the lucky possessor; also to be of sovereign virtue in cases of pregnancy. So, in the "Mercurius Rusticus," we read that a cock eagle's stone was stolen from a certain house, for which thirty pieces had been offered by a physician. Pyrrhus, king of Epirus, so Pliny (xxxvii. 1) tells us, had one of these gems in a ring, in which were to be seen the nine Muses and Apollo with his lyre, not engraved by art, but "sponte naturæ ita discurrentibus maculis."

9. There is an Irish tradition that Adam and Eve still exist as eagles in the island of Innis Bofin, at the mouth of Killery Bay, in Galway.

10. An old French naturalist (Aneau, "Déscription Philosophale de Nature," Paris, 1571) tells us that the eagle wages continual war with the wren and the tree creeper (*Certhea familiaris*), the latter of which troubles him sorely, inasmuch as, when he knows that the eagle is absent from the nest, he enters it and breaks all the eggs.

(For the enmity between the eagle and the wren see under Wren, ii. 1.)

*Genus* HALIÆTUS.

**WHITE-TAILED EAGLE** (*Haliætus albicilla*).

Also called

Sea eagle.
Erne (Shetland, Orkney, Isles).

Cf. A.-S. *Earn;* Breton, *Er;* Danish, *Oern.*

In Norway this bird is believed, before attacking cattle, to throw dust into their eyes, and so, by blinding, make them an easy prey. An old writer describes the process thus: "When she laboureth to drive the Hart headlong to ruine, she gathereth much dust as she flieth, and, sitting upon the Hart's horns (!), shaketh it into his eyes, and with her wings beateth him about the mouth, untill at last the poore Hart is glad to fall fainting to the ground" (Swan's "Speculum Mundi," p. 384).

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*Genus* ASTUR.

**GOSHAWK**—*i.e.* Goose-hawk (*Astur palumbarius*).

To the male goshawk, as well as to the male peregrine, the name "tercel" (see under Peregrine Falcon) was applied by falconers; but in the case of the latter the epithet of "gentil" or "gentle" was added, because being a long-winged hawk it was considered the more noble of the two.

The French name is *Autour* (Ital. *Astore*, Lat. *Astur*), or "Starred bird" (from Greek ἀστὴρ), as its plumage is starred with brown and red spots.

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*Genus* ACCIPITER.

**SPARROW-HAWK** (*Accipiter nisus*).

Called Spur-hawk or Spar-hawk in Aberdeenshire. Cf. *Sparr-hök* (Sweden), *Sparfel* (Brittany).

1. The slaty blue or leaden colour of upper parts of the body has caused to be applied to it the names

Blue hawk (Berks; Bucks; Oxon; West Riding; Stirling; East Lothian).
Blue merlin (Perth).

2. Also called
Maalin—*i.e.* Merlin (Shetland Isles).
Gleg hawk (Renfrew). "Gleg" = quick-eyed.
Pigeon hawk.

3. The name given by the old falconers to the male sparrow-hawk was "Musket" (Fr. *Mouchuet*, Ital. *Mosquetto*, Dutch *Mosket*), either from its colour "gris de mouche," or from its small size. So we find, in the *Merry Wives of Windsor*, Mrs. Ford addressing Falstaff's page with

"How now, my eyas musket?"

Here, as Mr. Harting observes ("Ornith. of Shakespeare," pp. 74, 75) "eyas" signifies a nestling; hence Mrs. Ford probably intended to imply no more than we should mean by a "perky little fellow."

An "eyas" is probably a mispronunciation of "a niais," which is a French word for a bird taken from the nest—*nid* (*Niaso*, Italy; *Nestling*, Germany).

4. The higher a sparrow-hawk flies, so the Bretons say, the better can he see the small birds which are on the ground. He cries to them—

"Sauvez-vous où vous voudrez,
Plus je serai haut, mieux je vous verrai!"

They also declare that these hawks flap their wings to lull the small birds to sleep.

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*Genus* MILVUS.

**KITE** (*Milvus ictinus*). A.-S. *Cyta.*

1. From its forked tail this bird has received the names of
Fork tail.
Crotch tail (Essex).
"Crotch" = a post with a forked top, used in building.

2. Also called
Gled, Glead, or Greedy gled (Salop; North of England; Scotland).

"Kites and buzzards," says White in his "Selborne," "sail round in circles with wings expanded and actionless; and it is from their gliding manner that the former are still called in the north of England 'gleads' or 'gleds,' from the Saxon *glidan*, to glide." (See under Buzzard.)

Sir Walter Scott writes in "Guy Mannering":—

"When the gled's in the blue cloud
The laverock lies still."

Puttock (see under Buzzard).

"A puttocke, set on pearch, fast by a falcon's side,
Will quickly show itselfe a kighte, as time hath often tried."
(Gascoigne, "Councell to Duglass Dive.")

3. Folk lore of the kite.

The kite, so the Czechs believe, is not allowed to drink from a spring, but only from the pools formed by the rain in the clefts of rocks. Hence in dry summers he is sorely troubled with thirst, and flies aloft, calling "Pit! pit! pit!" (*i.e.* to drink! to drink! to drink!) thus intreating God to send refreshing showers. (Grohmann, p. 66.) See Green Woodpecker, ii. 2, *b*.

The kite is also considered in Bohemia to be the bearer of messages from the devil to the village sorcerers; he flies in and out of their houses by the chimney.

A curious peculiarity of this bird is noticed in the *Winter's Tale*, IV. iii., where Autolycus says, "My traffic is sheets; when the kite builds, look to lesser linen"—meaning that his practice was to steal sheets, leaving the smaller linen to be carried away by the kites, who will occasionally carry it off to line their nests (Singer's "Shakespeare," iv. 67, quoted by Dyer, "Folk Lore of Shakespeare," p. 124). Mr. Dyce ("Glossary," p. 243) quotes the following remarks of Mr. Peck on this passage:—"Autolycus here gives us to understand that he is a thief of the first class. This he explains by an allusion to an odd vulgar notion. The common people, many of them, think that if any one can find a kite's nest, when she has young, before they are fledged, and sew up their back doors, so as they cannot mute, the mother kite in compassion to their distress, will steal lesser linen, as caps, cravats, ruffles, or any other such small matters as she can best fly with, from off the hedges where they are hanged to dry after washing, and carry them to her nest, and there leave them, if possible to move the pity of the first comer to cut the thread and ease them of their misery."

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*Genus* PERNIS.

## HONEY BUZZARD (*Pernis apivorus*).

The Welsh name for this bird is *Bod y mel*, or Honey kite. Bee kite, or Bee buzzard, which corresponds with the Latin title, would be more suitable, as the bird does not feed on the honey, but on the insect which produces the honey. Also called

Capped buzzard.

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*Genus* FALCO.

## PEREGRINE FALCON (*Falco peregrinus*).

A name given to it from its wandering habits.

Cf. *Faucon pélérin* (France); *Wanderfalk* (Germany).

1. From the dark bluish-grey of its upper plumage it is called

Blue-backed falcon.

Blue hawk (Mid Scotland; Ireland).

2. From its prey

Game hawk (Scotland generally).
Duck hawk.

3. Various names.

Saker—*i.e.* sacker or plunderer (obsolete).
Cliff hawk (Devon; Cornwall; Ireland).

From the place of its nest

Hunting hawk (East Lothian; the Cheviot Hills).
Stock hawk (Shetland Isles).
Faakin—*i.e.* Falcon hawk (Aberdeen).
Goshawk (Ireland).

Improperly applied. The true Goshawk (*Astur palumbarius*) is short-winged.

In falconry the male peregrine was called the tiercel, tassel, or tercel, gentle: the former name being given to it because it was about one-third smaller than the falcon, by which title the female was known; the latter from its tractable disposition.

Cf. *Terzuolo* (Italy); *Terzelot* (Germany); *Tarsel* (Holland).

**HOBBY** (*Falco subbuteo*).—Fr. *Hobereau*.

From the Latin *albus*, the whitish tint of its plumage distinguishing it from the other species of hawks, whose colour, generally speaking, is dark. The formation of the name "hobby" may be seen from the following French provincial names:—

*Alban* (Old Provençal), *Aubier*, *Aubreau* (Old French), *Obereau*, *Hobereau* (Mod. French).

Called *Albanella* (Italy), *Hoberell* (Brittany), *Weissback* (Swabia).

Van-winged hawk (Hants).

**MERLIN** (*Falco æsalon*).

Cf. *Emerillon* (France), *Smerlo* (Italy), *Schmerl* (Germany).

1. From the greyish-blue of its upper plumage it is called

Blue hawk (North Riding).
Small blue hawk (Stirling).

2. From its habit of sitting on a bare stone or piece of rock it has received the names of

Stone falcon (North Wales; Scotland).
Rock hawk, Stone hawk.

3. Various names.

Sparrow-hawk (Scotland).
Hobby (Shetland Isles).
Hawk kestrel (Do.).

## KESTREL (*Tinnunculus alaudarius*).

Cf. *Crescelle, Crescerelle* (France); *Cristel* (Burgundy); *Cristarello* (Naples). So

Creshawk (Cornwall).

1. From its well-known habit of remaining stationary (stand-in-gale), hovering and poising itself over a particular spot, are derived the names

Stand hawk (West Riding).
Stannel or Stanchel.
Stannel hawk.
Stonegall, or Steingale.
Windhover (South and West of England).
Hoverhawk (Berks; Bucks).
Fleingall, *i.e.* Fly in gale.
Vanner hawk, Wind fanner.

From the fanning movement of the wings.

Windcuffer (Orkney Isles).
Windsucker (Kent).

"Kistrilles or windsuckers, that filling themselves with winde fly against the wind evermore"—Nashe, "Lenten Stuffe" (in *Harleian Miscellany*, vi. 170).

Windbibber (Kent).

A Welsh name is *Cudyll y gwynt, i.e.* wind hawk.

2. Names given from the red tint of its plumage.

Red hawk (Stirling).

Cf. *Rousset mohet* (Luxembourg); *Cudyll côch* (Wales). The Gaelic title is *Clamhan ruadh, i.e.* red kite.

3. Various names.

Kite (Salop).
Keelie (neighbourhood of Edinburgh).

From its loud, shrill cry.

Blood hawk (Oxon).

From the blood-red colour of the eggs. (C. M. Prior.)

Maalin, *i.e.* Merlin (Shetland Isles).
Sparrow-hawk (Ireland).

Called in Norway *Taarn falk*, or tower falcon.

4. Kestrel and sparrow-hawk.

"The sparrow hawk," says Lupton in his "Thousand Notable Things," "is a fierce enemy to all pigeons; but they are defended by the castrel, whose sight and voice the sparrow hawk doth fear—which the pigeons or doves know well enough, for where the castrel is, from thence will not the pigeons go (if the sparrow hawk be nigh), through the great trust she hath in the castrel, her defender."

The Bohemians believe the kestrel to be a bird of good omen. He shows them the best watering places in the rivers and pools, and if a robber approaches any one who has fallen asleep out of doors, wakes the sleeper with his warning voice. Hence he is the dread of forest thieves and poachers. (Grohmann.)

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*Genus* PANDION.

## OSPREY (*Pandion haliætus*).

From the Latin *ossifraga, i.e.* bonebreaker, because fragments of bone are found in its stomach.

1. Also called

Fishing hawk or fish hawk (Scotland; Shetland Isles).

Cf. *Fischhabicht* (Germany).

Mullet hawk.

Eagle fisher.

Cf. *Aigle pêcheur* (France).

Bald buzzard.

From its white head and feathers. Cf. *Balbusard* (France).

Water eagle (Old Scotch). Equivalent to the Gaelic *Iolair-uisg*.

Called in Italy *Angiusta plumberia, i.e.* the leaden eagle, because its sudden descent on its prey is like the fall of lead.

The Welsh names are *Pysg eryi, i.e.* fish eagle, and *Gwalch y werlgi, i.e.* sea hawk.

2. Shakespeare alludes to the osprey in *Coriolanus*, Act IV. sc. vii.

Aufidius *loq.* "As is the osprey to the fish who takes it
By sovereignty of nature."

"Here," says Mr. Staunton, "the image is founded on the fabulous power attributed to the osprey of fascinating the fish on which it preys. Thus in Peele's play called *The Battle of Alcazar* (1594), Act II., sc. i.:

"I will provide thee of a princely ospray,
That, as she flieth over fish in pools,
The fish shall turn their glistering bellies up,
And thou shalt take thy liberal choice of all."

And also in Drayton, *Polyolbion*, song xxv.,—

> "The osprey, oft here seen, tho' seldom here it breeds,
> Which over them the fish no sooner do espy,
> But, betwixt him and them by an antipathy,
> Turning their bellies up, as though their death they saw,
> They at his pleasure lie, to stuff his gluttonous maw."

3. An old belief is mentioned by Harrison, in his "Description of Britain," prefixed to Holinshed's "Chronicle," vol. i., p. 382, who writes respecting the osprey, "It hath not beene my hap hitherto to see anie of these foules, and partlie through mine owne negligence; but I heare that it hath one foot like a hawke to catch hold withall, and another resembling a goose, wherewith to swim; but whether it be so or not so, I refer the further search and trial thereof to some other." Giraldus Cambrensis ("Topography of Ireland," p. 38, ed. Wright) improves on this, moralising as follows:—"In like manner the old enemy of mankind fixes his keen eyes on us, however we may try to conceal ourselves in the troublesome waves of this present world, and ingratiating himself with us by temporal prosperity, which may be compared to the peaceable foot, the cruel spoiler then puts forth his ravenous claws to clutch miserable souls and drag them to perdition."

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*Order* STEGANOPODES.

*Family* PELECANIDÆ.

*Genus* PHALACROCORAX.

## CORMORANT (*Phalacrocorax carbo*).

(Fr. *Cormoran—i.e. Corvus marinus*, or Sea raven. Another derivation is from *Cor* = *Corbeau* and *Morán*, a contraction of the Breton word *Môrvran*, which means Sea crow.)

Also called

Sea crow.

Coal goose (Kent).

Scart (Lancashire; North of Ireland; Orkney Isles).

Cf. *Scarf* (Norway). See below, under Shag, 1.

Gorma—*i.e.* Gor mew. See under Carrion Crow, 1.

In the Shetland Isles the young cormorants are called "brongie," the adults "loering."

Cowe'en elders (Kirkcudbright).

From Colvend, a coast parish in that county.

Mochrum elders (Wigtown).

From a loch of that name. "Perhaps their present appellation was bestowed on the cormorants by our Presbyterian forefathers in the days when the kirk session held supreme sway in rural places, and might be one way in which the people showed their dislike to its inquisitorial functions." (Robert Service, in *Zoologist*, 1878, p. 428.)

Isle of Wight parsons (Hants).

2. Thompson, in his "History of the Birds of Ireland" (iii. 241), says that the country-people about Lough Neagh believe that these birds daily visit the sea, and that they would die if they did not get a drink of salt water within the twenty-four hours.

The voracity of the cormorant has become so proverbial, that a greedy and voracious eater is often compared to this bird.

At certain states of the tide—chiefly about low water—cormorants may often be seen standing on the rocks, with outspread wings, drying their feathers:—

> "The cormorant stands upon its shoals,
> His black and dripping wings
> Half open to the wind."

So, too, does Milton say of Satan, that he

> "On the tree of life,
> The middle tree, the highest there that grew,
> Sat like a *cormorant*."

3. On Sunday, September 9th, 1860, a cormorant took up its position on the steeple of Boston church, in Lincolnshire, much to the alarm of the superstitious. There it remained, with the exception of two hours' absence, till early on Monday morning, when it was shot by the caretaker of the church. The fears of the credulous were singularly confirmed when the news arrived of the loss of the *Lady Elgin* at sea, with three hundred passengers, amongst whom were Mr. Ingram, member for Boston, with his son, on the very morning when the bird was first seen.

## SHAG (*Phalacrocorax graculus*).

1. So called from the tufted rough feathers that appear on the heads of the male birds when young. (A.-S. *scega*, akin to Swedish *skägg*, a beard). Whence also

Crested cormorant.
Tufted skart.
Skart (Orkney Isles).
Scarf (Shetland Isles).

2. Various names.

Crane (Northumberland).
Green cormorant (Ireland).

From the rich dark-green colour of its plumage.

Cole goose (Kent).

*Genus* SULA.

**GANNET** (*Sula bassana*).

1. A.-S. *ganot* (akin to Dutch *gent* = a gander); whence

Gan (Wales; Forfar).
Herring gant (Norfolk).

2. Also called

Solan goose.

"Solan is derived from Icelandic *Súlan* = the gannet, where *n* stands for the definite article" (Skeat).

Bass goose, or Basser (Forfar).

From their favourite haunt in the Firth of Forth, the Bass rock; hence the Latin *bassana*. Mr. Rennie ("Habits of Birds," p. 377) states that the more uninformed of the Scottish peasantry believe that this bird grows by the bill upon the cliffs of the Bass, of Ailsa and of St. Kilda.

Channel goose (North Devon).
Spectacled goose.

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*Order* HERODIONES.

*Family* ARDEIDÆ.

*Genus* ARDEA.

**HERON** (*Ardea cinerea*).

1. The heron, or hern, is so called from its harsh cry. Other forms of the same word are

Harn (Norfolk).
Harnser (Suffolk).
Harnsey (Norfolk).
Hernsew, Heronseugh (Yorkshire).
Hernshaw, Heronshaw (Notts).
Huron (Roxburgh).
Herald (Forfar).
Hegrie, Skip hegrie, Hegril's skip (Shetland Isles).

Cf. *Hégron* (Savoie); *Aghirone* (Italy).

2. Familiar names.

Jack hern (Sussex).
Moll hern (Midlands).
Jenny crow (North).

Jenny heron (Kirkcudbright).
Tammie herl (Perth).
Jemmy lang legs (Hundred of Lonsdale).
Jemmy lang neck „ „

3. Also called

Frank (Suffolk; Stirling).

From its harsh cry.

Crane (Somerset; Northants; Westmoreland; Lancashire; Ireland; Scotland).
Longie crane (Pembroke).
Long-necked heron (Ireland).
Craigie heron (Stirling; North Scotland). "Craig" = throat.

4. Herons prognosticating rain.

"Herons," writes an old author, "flying up and down in the evening, as if doubtful where to rest, presage some evill approaching weather." The Germans say, "Wenn der Fischreiher das Wasser aufpflügt, holt er Wasser."

5. Proverbial saying.

"He does not know a hawk from a handsaw": referred to in *Hamlet*, Act II., Sc. ii. :—"I am but mad north-north-west; when the wind is southerly I know a hawk from a handsaw." Here "handsaw" is a corruption of "heronshaw," or "hernshaw"; and the saying is one of contempt. Mr. J. C. Heath points out that as the morning used to be the favourite time for the sport of hawking, when the wind blew from the north-west the birds would probably fly so that any person watching them had the sun in his eyes, and could not easily distinguish the quarry from its pursuer; but that when the wind was southerly, the birds flew from the sun and one could easily "know a hawk from a handsaw." (See "Notes to *Hamlet*," by Clark and Wright, 1876, p. 159.)

6. The heron in medicine.

The fat of a heron, killed at the full of the moon, is believed in the north of Ireland to be an excellent remedy for rheumatism.

7. Folk lore of the heron.

In Angus there is a popular superstition that this bird waxes and wanes with the moon; that it is plump when the moon is full, and so lean at the change that it can scarcely raise itself, so that it can almost be taken with the hand. (Jamieson.)

It is said in Ireland that small eels pass through the intestines of a heron uninjured, so that it swallows the same individual several times in succession. This belief was shared by Pontoppidan, who goes most minutely into particulars to explain the process.

The Bohemians declare that the heron warns men of their danger when lost in the marshes, and endeavours by her cry to lead them to a safe place.

8. Vow of the heron.

When Robert of Artois, having been outlawed by Philip of Valois, and driven from Namur, took refuge at the court of Edward III., he endeavoured

to excite the ambition of that monarch by urging him to tear the French crown from the brows of Philip, and place it, as his rightful inheritance, on his own head. To effect this, he had recourse to the following device. One day he proceeded to the palace, accompanied by minstrels, and bearing in great state two silver dishes, each of which contained a roast heron. Kneeling before the monarch, he offered them for his acceptance, declaring that they, the most cowardly of all birds, were well suited as a present to the greatest coward that ever lived. The plan was successful; and Edward, with all his knights, pledged themselves to enter France, sword in hand, before a year had expired. This incident forms the subject of a historical poem of the fourteenth century (published in 1781 by M. La Curne de St. Palaye) entitled "The Vow of the Heron," which may be found in Mr. Thomas Wright's "Political Poems and Songs, etc., temp. Edw. III. to Ric. III."

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*Genus* BOTAURUS.

## BITTERN (*Botaurus stellaris*).

1. O. E. *Bitoure*; whence also

Bittour.
Buttal.
Butter bump, or Bottle bump (Yorkshire).
Bitter bum.
Bumpy cors—*i.e.* Welsh, *Bwmp y gors* = Boom of the marsh.
Bumble.

2. It frequents moist and boggy places; which habit, combined with its hoarse cry, have caused it to be called

Bog bumper (Scotland).
Bog blutter, or Bog jumper.
Bog drum (Ireland; Scotland).
Bull o'the bog (Roxburgh).

3. The deep and solemn character of the booming noise peculiar to the male bittern, has vested the bird with an uncanny character. "I remember," says Goldsmith in his "Animated Nature," "in the place where I was a boy, with what terror the bird's note affected the whole village: they considered it the presage of some sad event; and generally found, or made, one to succeed it. I do not speak ludicrously, but if any person in the neighbourhood died, they supposed it could not be otherwise, for the Night Raven had foretold it." (For "Night raven" see under "Brown Owl.") The cry to which Goldsmith alludes was formerly supposed to be produced by the bird plunging its bill into the mud: hence Chaucer writes

> "And as a *Bittore bumbleth in the mire.*"
> ("Wife of Bath."

But Dryden, in his corresponding line, follows another explanation—viz., that the bittern puts its bill into a reed, and then blows through it:

> "Then to the water's brink she laid her head,
> And as a *Bittern bumps within a reed.*"

Bishop Hall, in his "Characters of Vertues and Vices," speaking of the superstitious man, says, "If a *Bittourn* fly over his head by night, he makes his will."

4. Weather prognostics from the bittern's cry.

"There'll either be rain or else summut waur,
When *Butter Bumps* sing upon Potteric Carr"
(J. Hawley, in *Zoologist*, February 1869,)

writing from the neighbourhood of Doncaster: a proverb used by old people as the bird is now extinct.

The Germans say: "If the bittern is heard early, we may expect a good harvest."

5. Folk lore of the bittern.

"I knew a man of very high dignity," says Sir Humphrey Davy, "who was exceedingly moved by omens, and who never went out shooting without a bittern's claw fastened to his button-hole by a riband, which he thought insured him 'good luck.'"

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*Order* ANSERES.

*Family* ANATIDÆ.

*Genus* ANSER.

## GREY-LAG GOOSE (*Anser cinereus*).

1. Yarrell states that the term "lag," as applied to this bird, is either a modification of the English word "lake" (Latin *lacus*), or perhaps an abbreviation of the Italian *lago*, from which latter country it is even probable that we may originally have obtained this our domesticated race. Also called

Wild goose.
Fen, or Marsh, goose.
Stubble goose (East Lothian).
Grey goose.

2. Wild geese as prognosticating the weather.

These birds fly in the shape of ∧ or ∨, or in an irregular wavy line, the strongest males being the leaders, and the young and weak forming the rear: hence the belief that the figure in the form of which they flew denoted the number of weeks of frost that would follow their appearance. In Morayshire they have a saying,

"Wild geese, wild geese, ganging to the sea,
Good weather it will be:
Wild geese, wild geese, ganging to the hill,
The weather it will spill."

3. In Scotland, says Chambers, when they see wild geese on the wing, the boys cry at the top of their voices—

"Here's a string o' wild geese,
How mony for a penny?
Ane to my lord,
And ane to my lady,
Up the gate and down the gate,
They're a' flown frae me."

4. It was believed that wild geese were peculiarly affected when flying by St. Hilda's Abbey, near Whitby. Camden writes, referring to this, "that those wilde geese which in winter time flie by flockes unto pooles and rivers that are not frozen over, in the south partes, whiles they flie over certaine fields neere adjoyning, soudainely fall downe to the ground, to the exceeding great admiration of all men: a thing that I would not have related, had I not heard it from very many persons of right good credit. But such as are not given to superstitious credulity, attribute this unto a secret property of the ground, and to a hidden dissent betweene this soile and those geese, such as is betweene wolves and squilla root."

5. The proverbial expression, "a wild goose chase," equivalent to an unsuccessful undertaking, is derived from the shyness and extreme wariness of the bird, which render approach extremely difficult.

## BEAN GOOSE (*Anser segetum*).

1. Also called Corn goose; names given from the bird's partiality to grain and pulse. Cf. *Oie des moissons* (France).

Wild goose (East Lothian; Ireland).

2. Mr. Yarrell (*Notes and Queries*, Ser. I., vol. v., p. 596) states that the noise in the air attributed to the Gabriel or Wish hounds, or Seven whistlers (see Widgeon, Lapwing, Curlew), is really caused by the bean geese coming southwards on the approach of winter, who choose dark nights for their migration, and utter loud and peculiar cries.

## WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE (*Anser albifrons*).

1. So called from the bird's white forehead; whence also

White-faced goose.
Bald goose (Scotland).

2 Various names.

Laughing goose. Cf. *Oie rieuse* (France).
Tortoise-shell goose (Ireland).

From the mottled markings on the abdomen.

*Genus* BERNICLA.

**BRENT GOOSE** (*Bernicla brenta*).

From Welsh *brenig*, Breton *brennig*, a limpet.

1. From the cry of this bird, which is varied, sounding like the different expressions "prott," "rott," and "crock," are derived the names

Rott goose, or Rat goose.
Road goose, or Rood goose.
Clatter goose (East Lothian).
Quink goose.
Crocker. Cf. *Crot* (Picardy).

"The Swedes call it the *prut*, as the peculiar noise it makes is supposed to resemble the voice of an old woman who is beating down the price (*prut*) of an article she wishes to buy." ("Naturalist in Norway," p. 170.)

2. Also called

Ware goose (Durham).

Because it feeds on seaweed, called "ware."

Horie, or Horra, goose (Shetland Isles).

From being found in the Sound of Horra.

Brant (Norfolk). See above.
Black goose (Essex).
Barnacle (Ireland).

The common name for this species in Ireland—a name entirely erroneous. But in some parts the true Barnacle goose and the Brent are distinguished as the Norway Barnacle and the Wexford Barnacle.

**BARNACLE GOOSE** (*Bernicla leucopsis*). See below.

1. Also called

Bar goose (Essex).
Clakis or Claik (East Lothian, and Scotland generally).

Perhaps from the claik or clack, the noise they make.

White-faced barnacle.
Norway barnacle (Ireland).
Rood goose (obsolete).
Routherock (Orkney Isles: an almost obsolete term).

2. Tree goose.

So called from the old legend which declared this bird to be produced from trees, resembling willows, which grew in the Orkney Isles; it being also

believed that each end of the branch produced small round balls, which, when ripe, dropped into the sea, and then appeared as a perfect goose.

A little later on, this story became modified. Gerard, Meyer, Gesner, Turner, and others declared that the germ of the bernicle was to be found in a species of shell (*Lepas anatifera*) which adheres in clusters to decayed timber and the bottom of ships. The quaint account Gerard gives of it is worth transcribing. After saying that barnacles were produced, according to the testimony of others, in the north of Scotland and the adjacent islands called Orcades, he proceeds to declare "what his own eyes have seen and hands have touched. There is a small island in Lancashire called the Pile of Foulders, wherein are found the broken pieces of old ships, some whereof have been cast thither by shipwreck, and also the trunks or bodies, with the branches, of old rotten trees, cast up there likewise, whereon is found a certain spume or froth, that in time breedeth into certain shells, in shape like those of the mussel, but sharper pointed, and of a whitish colour ; wherein is contained a thing in form like a lace of silk, one end whereof is fastened unto the inside of the shell, even as the fish of oysters and mussels are. The other end is made fast unto the belly of a rude mass or lump, which in time cometh to the shape and form of a bird ; when it is perfectly formed, the shell gapeth open, and the first thing that appeareth is the foresaid lace or string ; next come the legs of the bird hanging out, and as it groweth greater it openeth the shell by degrees, till at length it is all come forth and hangeth only by the bill. In short space after it cometh to full maturity, and falleth into the sea, where it gathereth feathers and groweth to a fowl, bigger than a mallard, and lesser than a goose ; having black legs and bill, or beak, and feathers black and white, spotted in such a manner as is our magpie, which the people of Lancashire call by no other name than a tree goose." That there might be no mistake on the subject he adds, "For the truth hereof, if any doubt, may it please them to repaire unto me, and I shall satisfie them by the testimonie of good witnesses" (Herbal, p. 1587). Many old writers—*e.g.* Shakespeare (*Tempest*, iv. 1) ; Butler ("Hudibras," iii. 2. 655) ; Du Bartas ("Divine Week," p. 228) ; Bishop Hall ("Virgidemiarum," lib. iv. sat. 2)—mention this strange idea. The marine animal—a triton, having many cirrhi or fine feather-like tentacula, with a long worm-like stem by which it hangs—that gave rise to this error, is to be found adhering in clusters to floating pieces of wood and the sides of rocks. Its shell is milk-white, thin, smooth and semi-transparent, with the top open.

3. As regards the derivation of "bernacle," Max Müller ("Lectures on the Science of Language," 2nd series, 1864, pp. 533-51) thinks that "barnacles," the cirripeds, "pernaculæ," were confused with the geese that came from Ireland, "hiberniculæ." (List of British Birds.)

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*Genus* CYGNUS.

## MUTE SWAN (*Cygnus olor*).

1. So called from its comparative silence; though not absolutely voiceless, for it utters now and then a soft, low, plaintive note, especially while with its young.

Col. Hawker ("Instructions to Young Sportsmen," ed. xi., p. 269) writes that he was "amused with watching and listening to a domesticated swan, as he swam up and down the water in the Regent's Park. He tuned up a sort

of melody, made with two notes, C and the minor third, E flat, and kept working his head as if delighted with his own performance."

2. Various names are given to the male and female of the domesticated swan. Yarrell says that the former is called Cob, the latter Pen. On the Thames the cock birds are called Tom, or Cock ; the hens, Jenny, or Hen. In the "Archæologia" (xvi. 16) it is stated that the old Lincolnshire names were Sire and Dam, respectively.

### 3. Swans singing before death.

This old superstition has been thoroughly disproved by modern research. How it originated it is impossible to say, but it is found, according to Douce ("Illustrations of Shakespeare," i. 262), in Plato, Chrysippus, Aristotle, Euripedes, Philostratus, Cicero, Seneca, and Martial, though discredited by Pliny, Ælian, Athenæus, and, more recently, by Sir Thomas Browne. It is alluded to several times by Shakespeare—*e.g.* in the *Merchant of Venice*, Act iii., sc. 2 :—

"A swan-like end, fading in music" ;

and in *Othello*, Act v., sc. 2 :—

"I will play the swan, and die in music."

### 4. Weather lore.

Swans are believed in Hampshire to be hatched in thunderstorms, the reason of which bit of folk lore is not known. There is no doubt that they have an instinctive prescience of floods, for it is a well-known fact that before heavy rains the birds whose home is on the banks of the Thames raise their nests so as to save their eggs from being chilled by the water.

### 5. The swan a royal bird.

In England the swan is a royal bird, and by a statute (22 Edward IV.), it was ordered that no person who did not possess a freehold of a clear yearly value of five marks should be permitted to keep any swans ; and in 11 Hen. VII. it was ordained that "any one stealing or taking a swan's egg should have one year's imprisonment, and make payment of a fine at the king's will." Even at the present time it is felony to steal, or injure in any way, "a young swan." The privilege of keeping "a game" of swans is manifested by the grant of a swan mark, which is cut in the skin, or on the beak, of the swan, with a sharp knife. The Queen's mark is composed of five long ovals, pointed at each end. Two of these are placed in a longitudinal direction ; the other three transversely, a little lower down. The mark of the Vintners Company consists of two nicks in the form of a V ; hence the origin of the inn sign—the "Swan with Two Necks" (*i.e.* nicks). It used to be the custom of the Dyers and Vintners Companies, who own many swans on the Thames, to go up the river on the first Monday in August for the purpose of nicking, or marking, and counting their birds. This yearly "progress" was commonly called "swan-hopping," the correct title being "swan-upping" ; the swans being taken up, nicked or marked. (For further information on swans' marks, see Yarrell iii. *sub voc.*)

### 6. Oath on the swan.

The peacock, swan, heron, and pheasant were birds of high esteem in the days of chivalry. The swan was the device of Edward I. ; and in 1306, when the young Prince Edward, after receiving knighthood from his father, conferred that honour on three hundred young gentlemen, his friends, "after

he had dubbed and embraced them all," two swans were introduced, "gorgeously caparisoned, their beaks gilt, a most pleasing sight to all beholders," and upon them Edward vowed that he would avenge the death of John Comyn. It was also an old German custom (see Grimm's "Rechtsalterthümer," 900) to swear upon the swan, probably because it was sacred to Freyr, whose cloud-ship, Skidbladnir, it would resemble.

### 7. The swan lamenting.

"The swan," says Braithwaite ("The Penitent Pilgrim," 1641—Reprint Pickering, 1853, p. 128), "if at any time she pride herself in her beauty, no sooner looks upon her black feet than she wails her plumes."

## WHOOPER SWAN (*Cygnus musicus*).

### 1. So called from its powerful voice; other names are

Whistling swan.
Wild swan.
Elk.
Cf. the Breton term, *alarc'h*.

As these birds fly in wedge-like figure they utter a shrill, whooping cry, which produces a pleasant effect as it comes down from the upper air, modulated by distance. So Drayton writes of the Lincolnshire fens,—

> "Here in my vaster pools, as white as snow or milk,
> In water black as Styx, swims the wild swan, the ilke (*i.e.* elk)
> Of Hollanders so termed, no niggard of his breath,
> (As poets say of swans who only sing in death);
> But, as other birds, is heard his tunes to roat,
> Which like a trumpet comes, from his long arched throat."
> ("Polyolbion," Song xxv.)

### 2. Swan maidens.

In the old Aryan mythology the sky was regarded as a sea or great lake, and the clouds either as ships sailing over it or as bright birds, the fleecy cirrhi being looked upon as swans. From this thought it was easy to pass to the idea that these birds were maidens with swans' plumage, who could assume the human form at will. (See for a full treatment of this subject Baring Gould's "Myths of the Middle Ages," ii. 296 *et seq.*, also Cox's "Aryan Mythology," ii. 282, 283.)

It is believed in county Mayo, on the authority of Mr. R. Glennon, "that the souls of virgins who, whilst living, had been remarkable for the purity of their lives, were after death enshrined in the form of these birds, as emblematic of their purity and beatitude. For this reason they remain in safety, as it is also believed that whoever should be so unlucky as to meddle with them would pay for his temerity by the forfeit of his life ere the year had elapsed." (Walters' "Nat. Hist. of the Birds of Ireland," pp. 194, 195.)

### 3. Order of the Swan.

Connected with the above myth of the Swan maidens are the romances of Lohengrin and Helias, the Knight of the Swan, in commemoration of which

Frederic II. of Brandenburg instituted the Order of the Swan, in 1440. There was also an order of knighthood of the same name at Cleves, of which duchy one version of the story made Helias duke. Through Anne of Cleves the White Swan became a favourite tavern sign.

*a.* Romance of Lohengrin.

Lohengrin was son of Percival, and Knight of the Holy Grail. Summoned mysteriously from Montsalvatsch he came to Brabant in a boat drawn by a swan, and, having freed the Duchess Elsen from Frederic of Telramund, who claimed her as his wife, married her, on the condition that she should not ask his race. For some time they lived happily together; but one day his wife, being laughed at by her friends for not knowing whence her husband had sprung, resolved to ask him of his family. He told her that his father was Percival, and that God had sent him from the custody of the Grail; and then the white swan reappeared with the boat and carried him away.

*b.* Romance of Helias.

Helias, Knight of the Swan, was son of Oriant, King of Lilefort, and Beatrice. This Beatrice had seven children at a birth, one of whom was a daughter. Matabrune, her mother-in-law, caused them, when young, to be exposed in a forest, where they were taken care of by a hermit. However, they were discovered by the old queen's servants, and robbed of the silver chains which each wore; whereupon they were all changed into swans except Helias, who, being absent with the hermit, escaped. The rest of his life was spent in recovering his brothers' chains and restoring them to their former shape, which he succeeded in doing, except in the case of one whose chain had been melted down, and who therefore was doomed to remain a swan all his life. These two were the heroes of wonderful adventures, till Helias married the heiress of Bouillon, became ancestor of Godfrey, and finally disappeared for ever from his wife's sight in a boat drawn by a swan, his brother.

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*Genus* TADORNA.

## COMMON SHELDRAKE (*Tadorna cornuta*).

1. Called sheldrake from its variegated plumage, "shelled" or "sheld" having that meaning still in the Eastern counties.

Shell duck (Lancashire).
Skeldrake or Scale drake (Orkney Isles).
Skeel goose; Skeel duck (Scotland).
Sheld fowl (Orkney Isles).

2. The bar or belt of bright red-brown which passes round the breast on to the back has obtained for it the names of

Bar gander (Essex).
Bar drake (Ireland).
Bay duck (Norfolk).

From the colour of the belt.

3. Various names.

St. George's duck.
Burrow duck.

Because it makes its nest either in a rabbit burrow or in a hole hollowed out by itself. Cf. Χηναλώπηξ (Greece); *Canard Renard* or *Canard lapin* (France); *Volpoca* (Tuscany).

Pirennet, *i.e.* Pied ent or Pied duck.
Stock annet (East Scotland).
*i.e.* Stock ent. (See Jamieson, under "Stock Duck.")
Sly goose (Orkney Isles).

So called from its craftiness.

Links goose (Orkney Isles).

Because it frequents the links, or sandy plains near the sea.

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*Genus* MARECA.

## WIGEON (*Mareca penelope*).

From *vipio* (Lat.) = a small crane, as pigeon from *pipio*.

1. From its loud whistling call-notes this bird has received the names

Whistler.

Cf. *Canard siffleur* (France); *Pfeifer* (Bavaria).

Whim.
Whewer, or Whew duck. (See below, 3.)

Cf. *Vioux* (Savoy).

"Pandle" whew (Norfolk).

"Pandle," in Kent, means a shrimp.

2. Various names.

Bald pate.
Half duck (Norfolk).

Because worth only half the value of a wild duck.

Smee duck (Norfolk).
Cock winder (ditto).

3. The difference in the colours of the male and female has caused the following names to be applied to each :—

Golden head, or Yellow poll.

The *male* is so called on the east coast of Ireland; while the

*females* are called in the same district "Black wigeons," and in Norfolk, according to Ray, "Whewers."

Latham says that the young males were sold in London under the name of "Easterlings," and the females under that of "Lady fowl."

4. In Shropshire every species of wild duck, with the exception of *Anas boscas*, is called wigeon.

5. The loud ringing sound of the wigeons' wings, combined with their long, clear call-notes, heard during the night while the birds pass over in their flight, has caused the name of the "Seven whistlers" to be given to them in Portugal; where they are supposed to be the spirits of unbaptised children. (See under Lapwing, Curlew.)

6. The wigeon was supposed to be a silly bird, hence the word was sometimes used as synonymous with a fool. So

> "Th' apostles of this fierce religion,
> Like Mahomet's, were ass and wigeon,"
> ("Hudibras," I. i. 231,)

*i.e.*, silly beast and silly bird.

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*Genus* DAFILA.

## PINTAIL (*Dafila acuta*).

1. So called from the pointed appearance of the bird's tail, the two middle feathers of which are longer than the rest. Cf. *Pointard* (Anjou), *Pfeilschwanz* (Swabia), *Schwalbenente* (Switzerland), *Cuda longa* (Sicily). From this, as also from the beauty of its plumage, it has the name of

Sea pheasant (Hants; Dorset).

Cf. *Faisan de mer* (France).

2. Also called

Cracker.
Winter duck.
Lady bird (Dublin Bay).

From its grace of form.

Harlan (Wexford).

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*Genus* ANAS.

## WILD DUCK (*Anas boscas*).

1. The male is called

Mallard, *i.e.* male duck.

Cf. *Malart* (France), *Mallardo* (Naples).

The female
Duck.

The young ones
Flappers.

From the manner in which they scuffle along the water with feet and wings.

2. Various names.
Stock duck (Orkney Isles).

Cf. *Stock Ente* (Germany).

Mire duck (Forfar).
Moss duck (Renfrew; Aberdeen).
Muir duck (Stirling).
Grey duck (Lancashire; Dumfries).

3. Weather prognostic, derived from habits of wild ducks:

"When ducks are driving through the burn
That night the weather takes a turn."

4. As the wild duck is undoubtedly the original of our domestic varieties, it will be well to take this opportunity of noticing any scraps of folk-lore connected with the latter.

(*a*) It is believed in Rutlandshire that ducks' eggs, brought into a house after sunset, will never be hatched.

(*b*) The All Souls' Mallard.

The story of this bird is, or perhaps used to be, well known to Oxonians. A full account of the occurrence which gave rise to the annual festival, held at All Souls' College on January 14th, may be found in Hone's "Year Book," pp. 44, 45, 46, and summarised in the following extract from Pointer's "Oxoniensis Academia":—"Another custom is that of celebrating their Mallard-night every year on the 14th of January, in remembrance of a huge mallard or drake found (as tradition goes) imprisoned in a gutter or drain under ground, and grown to a vast bigness, at the digging for the foundation of the College."

"*The Merry Old Song of the All Souls' Mallard.*

"Griffin, bustard, turkey, capon,
Let other hungry mortals gape on;
And on their bones their stomach fall hard,
But let All Souls' men have their *Mallard.*
Oh! by the blood of King Edward,
Oh! by the blood of King Edward,
It was a swapping, swapping *Mallard.*

"The Romans once admired a *gander*
More than they did their chief commander ;
Because he saved, if some don't fool us,
The place that's called the *head of Tolus*,
Oh ! by the blood, etc.

"The poets feign Jove turned a swan,
But let them prove it if they can :
As for our proof 'tis not at all hard,
For it was a swapping, swapping Mallard.
Oh ! by the blood, etc.

"Therefore let us sing and dance a galliard,
To the remembrance of the Mallard :
And as the Mallard dives in pool,
Let us dabble, dive, and duck in bowl.
Oh ! by the blood, etc."

(*c*) "Ducks and Drakes."

This game is so called from the rebound of the stone on the water (French *ricochet*) resembling the half flying, half running motion of the duck when shooting along the surface. Hence "to make ducks and drakes of one's money" is to spend or squander it in as foolish a manner as if it were a stone to make ducks and drakes with.

To "swim like a duck" is proverbial.

(*d*) Divination from the breastbones of ducks.

"In Richmondshire some persons say that the breastbones of ducks after being cooked are observed to be dark coloured before a severe winter, and much lighter coloured before a mild winter."

(*Notes and Queries*, July 31st, 1875.)

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*Genus* CHAULELASMUS.

**GADWALL** (*Chaulelasmus streperus*).

Grey duck.

Cf. *Griset* (Eastern Pyrenees).

Rodge.
Sand wigeon (Essex).

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*Genus* QUERQUEDULA.

**GARGANEY** (*Querquedula circia*).

? = Small duck; *Caneta—i.e. petit canard* (Provence); *Gannette* (Berry); *Racanette* (Aube); *Arcanette* (Pays Messin); so Garganey.

Pied wiggon or wigeon.
Summer teal (Somerset; Norfolk).

From the time of its appearance.

Summer duck.
Cricket teal.

From its cry.

Cf. *Cric cric* (Jura); *Criquet* (Savoy); *Kriechentlein* (Germany).

**COMMON TEAL** (*Querquedula crecca*).

Dutch *Teling*.
Jay teal (Kirkcudbright).

From its colour.

Tael duik—*i.e.* Teal duck (Scotland generally).

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*Genus* SPATULA.

**SHOVELLER** (*Spatula clypeata*).

1. So called from its broad, curiously formed bill; whence also
Shovel bill.
Broad bill.
Shovelard (Norfolk, Sir Thos. Browne).
Spoon bill, or Spoon beak (Norfolk).
Whinyard (Waterford).

Whinyard is the name for a knife like the shoveller's bill in shape.

Cf. *Bec en cuiller* (France); *Palettone* (Italy); *Löffelente* (Germany).

2. Various names.
Maiden duck (Wexford).
Sheldrake (Waterford).

From the rich varied plumage of the male bird.

Kirk tullock.
Blue-winged shoveller.

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*Genus* FULIGULA.

**TUFTED DUCK** (*Fuligula cristata*).

1. So called from the pendent crest of very narrow feathers on the back of the head.

2. The following names, given to this bird, nearly all have reference to its colour, viz. :—

White-sided duck, or diver (Armagh).
Black wigeon (Devon).

Cf. *Négrown* (Provence); *Morillon* (France generally).

Black poker (Norfolk).

Poker is a common name in East Anglia for many species of the duck tribe.

Black curre (Hants).
Gold-eye duck (Wexford).
Crested diver (Ireland).
Curre wigeon (Somerset).
Doucker—*i.e.* Diver (Islay).

## SCAUP (*Fuligula marila*).

1. So named from its feeding among broken oyster and mussel shells; called in the north "scaup," whence also

Mussel duck (Norfolk).

2. From its colour.

*a.* The male is called

Green-headed diver (Belfast).
Black-headed diver.

From the black feathers, glossed with green, of the head.

Black duck (Somerset).

From the black head, neck, breast and wings. Cf. *négré* (Gard).

*b.* The female.
Bridle duck (Dublin).
White-faced duck.

From the broad white band round the base of the bill.

Dun bird (Essex).

From the dusky brown of its head, neck, breast and rump.

3. Various names.

Spoonbill duck (East Lothian).

From its broad bill.

Norway duck (Belfast).
Norwegian teal (Banff).
Mule (Wexford).
Holland duck (Forfar).

## POCHARD (*Fuligula ferina*).

Also called

Poker (Lincolnshire; Hants).

1. From its colour this bird has the names of

Dun bird (Essex; Dumfries; Ireland).
Dun curre; Dun air.
Blue poker.
Snuff-headed wigeon.
Red-headed, or Red-eyed, poker.

Cf. *Bouy testo rousso* (Gard).

Red-headed curre, or Red-headed wigeon.
Gold head (North of Ireland).

2. Also called

Wigeon diver (Cork Harbour).
Fresh-water wigeon (North of Ireland).
Bull-headed wigeon (Ditto).
Great-headed wigeon.
Vare-headed (*i.e.* weasel-headed) wigeon. See under Smew.
Whinyard (Wexford). See under Shoveller.
Diver or Doucker (Roxburgh).
Smee duck (Norfolk).

A name also given to the wigeon.

Well plum.
Atteal, or Attile duck (Orkney Isles).

Perhaps from Icel. *tialldr*.

---

*Genus* CLANGULA.

## GOLDEN-EYE (*Clangula glaucion*).

1. So called from the bright yellow irides; whence

Golden-eyed garrot.
Gowdy duck (East Lothian; Orkney Isles).

Lloyd says of it, "From the brilliancy of the eye there is a saying in Sweden, 'Klart som ett knip-öga'—*i.e.* bright as the eye of the golden-eyed garrot." Cf. *garrot* (France).

2. The dark back and white under parts have caused it to be named

Pied wigeon.
Whiteside (Westmoreland).
Grey-headed duck.

Only applied to the female bird.

3. The following names are derived from the whistling made with the wings.

Rattlewings (Norfolk).
Whistler.

Cf. *Schelle Ente* (Germany)—*i.e.* Bell duck.

From the sound produced by the flight resembling the tinkling of sleigh bells.

4. From its diving propensities it is called

Diving duck (Shetland Isles).
Diver or Doucker (Roxburgh).
Popping wigeon (Drogheda Bay).

As it pops down and up so suddenly.

5. Various names.

Morillon.

From the black head, neck and back of the males, which are so called, and described by some authors as a distinct species. In France, the name *morillon* is given to the tufted duck (*Fuligula cristata*).

Fresh-water wigeon (Strangford Lough).
Brown-headed duck.
Curre.

From the bird's croaking cry.

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*Genus* HARELDA.

## LONG-TAILED DUCK (*Harelda glacialis*).

1. Also called

Sharp-tailed duck.
Swallow-tailed sheldrake.

2. From its long plaintive cry it has received the names of

Caloo, or Calaw (Orkney, Shetland Isles).
Darcall.
Coal and candle-light (Orkney Isles).
Col-candle-wick (Fife).
Coldie (Forfar).

In the Hebrides it is called *Jan-bhochail*. *Jan* = bird; *bhochail* expressing its soft protracted note. (McGillivray.)

3. Various names.

Mealy bird (Norfolk).

The young are so called.

Northern Hareld (Aberdeen).

Hareld—*i.q. haveld*, the Icelandic name of the bird.

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*Genus* SOMATERIA.

## EIDER DUCK (*Somateria mollissima*).

From *Icel. ædr*, an eider duck.

1. Also called

Great black-and-white duck.

Dusky duck.

Dunter, or Dunter goose (Shetland Isles).

"Perhaps from old Swedish *dun* = down, and *taer-a* = to gnaw, whence our 'tear,' because it plucks the down from its breast as often as it lays its eggs" (Jamieson).

St. Cuthbert's duck, or Cudberduce (Northumberland).

From these birds breeding on the Farn islands, on the coast of Northumberland, where they were the companions of the saint's solitude.

2. The following information respecting the eider duck is given by Bishop Pontoppidan, in his "Natural History of Norway."—"If the first five eggs are taken away the bird lays again, but only three eggs, and in another nest: and if these are stolen, she lays a single egg. The female sits on the eggs for four weeks, and the male bird watches by her side. If any human being or beast of prey approaches the nest, the male bird cries 'Hu, hu, hu,' and then the female covers her eggs with moss and down, which she has ready for the purpose, and joins her mate on the water. If she remains away too long, the male bird drives her back with his wings, and if the eggs are spoilt, he gives her a beating and deserts her."

---

*Genus* ŒDEMIA.

## COMMON SCOTER (*Ædemia nigra*).

1. From its colour this bird has received the names

Black duck (Essex; Norfolk; Ireland).

Cf. *Canard négré* (Nice).

Black diver (Ireland, east coast).

2. Also called

Surf duck (Scotland).

From its habit of diving for shell-fish among the breakers.

Sea duck (Norfolk).
Doucker (Lancashire; Westmoreland).

3. The flesh of this bird is so rank and fishy, from its feeding on shell-fish, that it is allowed to Roman Catholics on fast days and in Lent. This has originated a belief which prevails in Normandy that, like the bernicle, it is produced from a bivalve, which is found adhering to the keels of ships. For the same reason is the proverb applied to a man on whom no reliance can be placed—"Il ressemble à une macreuse (a scoter); il n'est ni chair ni poisson."

## VELVET SCOTER (*Œdemia fusca*).

Also called

Velvet duck.
Black diver.
Great black duck.
Double scoter.

Cf. *Grande macreuse, Double macreuse* (France).

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*Genus* MERGUS.

## GOOSANDER (*Mergus merganser*).

1. From its saw-like bill this bird is called

Sawbill (Stirling).

Cf. *Bec en scie* (France).

Sawneb (Aberdeen).
Jacksaw.

2. The male bird presents a beautiful appearance, from the contrast of the rich buff orange colour of the breast with the black back: hence the names

Shell duck (on the Shannon).
Pied wigeon (Salop).

The females and young males, on the contrary, are of a dull greyish brown: hence they are called

Dun divers

3. Various names.

Land cormorant (Dublin).
Rantock (Orkney Isles).
Sparling fowl.

Generally applied to the female bird.

Spear wigeon (Kerry).

**RED-BREASTED MERGANSER** (*Mergus serrator*)—*i.e.* Diving Goose.

1. From its long curved bill, furnished with a serrated or saw-like edge, this bird has received the names of

Lesser-toothed diver.
Sawbill (Aberdeen; Stirling; Galway).
Sawneb (Aberdeen).
Sawbill wigeon (Galway).

2. From the Icel. *haveld* (see p. 162), are derived

Herald (Shetland Isles).
Herald duck (Forfar; Shetland Isles).
Harle (Orkney Isles).

Cf. *Harle* (France); *Erlou* (Piedmont).

Harle duck (Orkney Isles).
Earl duck (East Lothian).
Land harlan (Wexford).

3. Various names.

Bardrake (Down).

From the brown and ash-coloured streak on the rump.

Scale duck (Strangford Lough).
Grey diver (Islay).

Applied to the female bird.

Popping wigeon (Drogheda Bay).

A name also applied to the Golden eye (*Clangula glaucion*).

**SMEW** (*Mergus albellus*).

1. Also called

Smee, or Smee duck (Norfolk).

2. From its white crest and the band of black feathers on the

back of the head, which give something of the appearance of a hood, come the names

White nun (Ireland).

Cf. *Nonnette* (Picardy).

White-headed goosander.
White merganser, or White wigeon (Devon).

From its black back and white under parts it is called

Magpie diver (Ireland; Kent).

Cf. *Piotte—Harle piette* (France).

The female is called Red-headed smew.

3. In North Devon, according to Montagu, the name of Vare wigeon is given to the females and young males, from the resemblance of their heads to that of a "vare," or weasel. So in Norfolk they are called Weasel ducks, or Weasel coots.

Lough diver.

A name given to the immature males.

Easterling.

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*Order* COLUMBÆ.

*Family* COLUMBIDÆ.

*Genus* COLUMBA.

## RINGDOVE (*Columba palumbus*).

1. From its cooing note this bird has received the names

Too-zoo (Gloucestershire).
Cooscot (Craven; Teesdale).
Cushat (Berks; Bucks; Craven; Westmoreland).
Cruchet (North).
Cushiedoo.
Cusha (Roxburgh).

From A.-S. *Cusceote.*

Dow or Doo (Norfolk).

2. As this note is one of melancholy, the bird is called

Queest, Quest, or Quist (West and West Midland).
Quice, or Quease (Salop; Gloucestershire).
Wood quest (Dorset; Ireland).

From Lat. *questus,* a complaining.

3. Various names.

Culver (Dorset).

Cf. A.-S. *Culfre,—Couvre* (Normandy).

Cowprise (North).

Woodpigeon.

4. The ringdove's note.

The cooing of the woodpigeon produces, it is said—

"Take two-o coo, Taffy!
Take two-o coo, Taffy!"

Alluding, says Mr. Chambers, to the story of a Welshman, who thus interpreted the note, and acted upon the recommendation by stealing two of his neighbour's cows. "In the North Riding of Yorkshire the common people believe that at one period the cushat or ringdove laid its eggs upon the ground, and that the peewit *è contra* made its nest on high. They further believe that an amicable exchange took place between the two birds, and that at the present day they respectively sing out their feelings upon the subject. A local rhyme will have it that the peewit sings—

'Peewit, peewit,
I coup'd my nest and I've it.'

The cushat's note implies—

'Coo, coo, come now
Little lad with thy gad,
Come not now.'"

(Brockett, "Glossary of North-Country Words," ii. 71.)

Miss Busk, in her "Folk Lore of Rome," p. 20, gives a story of the woodpigeon and magpie from a Berkshire source, two other versions of which are related by Mr. Halliwell. Miss Busk's runs as follows:—

"The magpie was one day building her nest so neatly, and whispering to herself after her wont as she laid each straw in its place, 'This upon that, this upon that,' when the woodpigeon came by. Now, the woodpigeon was young and flighty, and had never learnt how to build a nest; but when she saw how beautifully neat that of the magpie looked, she thought she would like to learn the art. The busy magpie willingly accepted the office of teaching her, and began a new one on purpose. Long before she was half through, however, the flighty woodpigeon sang out, "That'll doo-oo." The magpie was offended at the interruption, and flew away in dudgeon, and that's why the woodpigeon always builds such ramshackle nests."

Mr. Halliwell, quoting an Isle of Wight legend, tells us that "soon after the creation of the world, all the birds were assembled for the purpose of learning to build their nests, and the magpie, being very sagacious and cunning, was chosen to teach them. Those birds that were most industrious, such as the wren and the long-tailed capon or pie-finch, he instructed to make whole nests in the shape of a cocoanut, with a small hole on one side. Others, not so diligent, he taught to make half nests, shaped something like a teacup. Having thus instructed a great variety of birds according to their capacity, it came to the turn of the woodpigeon, who, being a careless and lazy bird, was very indifferent about the matter, and while the magpie was directing him how to place the little twigs, etc., he kept exclaiming, 'What, athurt and across! what zoo! what zoo! athurt and across! what zoo! what zoo!' At length the magpie was so irritated at his stupidity and indolence that he flew away, and the woodpigeon, having had no more instruction, to this day builds the worst

nest of any of the feathered tribe, consisting merely of layers of cross twigs. Montagu," he continues, "gives a Suffolk version of the tale, which differs considerably from the above. 'The magpie, it is said, once undertook to teach the pigeon how to build a more substantial and commodious dwelling; but instead of being a docile pupil, the pigeon kept on her old cry of "Take two, Taffy! take two!" The magpie insisted that this was a very unworkmanlike manner of proceeding, one stick at a time being as much as could be managed to advantage; but the pigeon reiterated her "Take two, take two," till Mag in a violent passion gave up the task, exclaiming, "I say that one at a time's enough, and, if you think otherwise, you may set about the work yourself, for I will have no more to do with it." Since that time the woodpigeon has built her slight platform of sticks, which certainly suffers much in comparison with the strong substantial structure of the magpie.'" (Halliwell's "Popular Rhymes," 260, 261.)

Another imitation of the woodpigeon's note is the following:

"Curr dhoo! curr dhoo!
Love me and I'll love you."

While the pigeon and the wren hold this dialogue:

"The dove says, coo, coo, what shall I do?
I can scarce maintain two."

(Alluding to the number of eggs always found in a ringdove's nest.)

"Pooh! pooh!" says the wren, "I have got ten.
And keep them all like gentlemen."

"'Who stole my grey pease?" says the quease."

In Sweden it is said that a ringdove perched on the cross while the blessed Saviour was hanging thereon and sat there, wailing forth its sorrowing note of "Kyrie! Kyrie!" (Lord, Lord) to soothe His agony. See under Lapwing, p. 185.

5. Proverbial sayings.

"Pigeons never do know woe
Till they do a benting go."

With reference to which Mr. Halliwell says that these birds are never short of food, except when they are obliged to live on the seeds of the grass, which ripen before the crops of grain. The seedstalk of grass is called the "bent," hence the term "benting."

"When the pigeons go a benting,
Then the farmers lie lamenting" (Norfolk).

"Thee bist a queer quist." (Wilts.)

The vulgar explanation of this phrase is, that a half-witted fellow got up a tree to rob what he supposed was a wood-quist's nest, when he discovered it was the nest of an owl, full of young ones, who, when the fellow attempted to take one of them, manifested their indignation at the intrusion by hissing and pecking, upon which he exclaimed, "Thee bist a queer quist!" (Akerman's "Wiltshire Glossary," 41, 42.)

## STOCK DOVE (*Columba œnas*).

So called from its nesting in the stocks of trees.

Various names.

Cushat (Northants).

Wood dove (Scotland).

Bush dove.

## ROCK DOVE (*Columba livia*).

1. Also called Rocker or Rockier.

Blue dove (North Riding).
Sea pigeon (Ireland).
Rock pigeon (Ireland; Scotland).
Rock doo (Shetland Isles).
Sod (Forfar).
Doo (North Scotland).
Wild pigeon (Shetland Isles).

2. As there is no doubt that this species is the original of our domestic pigeon, it will be well to take this opportunity of mentioning any folk lore connected with that bird.

It is essentially a bird of death. Thus, if a white pigeon settles on a chimney, some one of the occupants of the house will pass away ere long, but should the bird enter and perch on the table, it is considered a less portentous omen, and to signify sickness. This is a wide-spread belief through England, as Mr. Henderson, in his "Folk Lore of the Northern Counties," p. 49, mentions two instances which have come under his own knowledge. "The recent death," he says, "of a clergyman of some eminence in the town of Hull was preceded by the flight of a pure white pigeon around the house, and its resting again and again on the window-sill." And the vicar of Fishlake, in the West Riding, informs me that one of his parishioners mentioned the same portent to him; telling him, as an illustration, of a Primitive Methodist preacher, a very worthy man, who had fallen down dead in the pulpit soon after giving out his text. "And not many hours before," she went on, "I had seen a white pigeon light on a tree hard by, and I said to a neighbour I was sure summat were going to happen." So, too, all readers of "Westward Ho!" will remember how a white bird was the presage of death to Captain Oxenham.

It is also a common idea that no one can die (some say die happy) on pigeons' feathers. As an illustration of this, a correspondent of *Notes and Queries*, Ser. IV., viii. 470, informs us that when a pigeon pie was being made, his housekeeper invariably burnt the feathers. On being asked the reason, she replied that if a single feather were found in a bed or pillow, nobody could die upon it, but would "die hard" till it was removed. The feathers of game birds are also considered in Gloucestershire to have the same property, as also in Yorkshire, Cumberland, Derbyshire, Monmouthshire, Glamorganshire, and in Ireland. In a letter to the *Athenæum*, the explanation given is, that none of these feathers are fit for use, being too hard and sharp in the barrel.

Again, it is believed in Northamptonshire that it is a sign of death should a sick person desire to eat a pigeon, as he would want nothing else.

But on the other hand we hear from Gloucestershire that "the friends of a man on his deathbed sent, some distance, to one of his children; and, lest the sick might die before his arrival, they put a live pigeon into the bedroom, and kept it there, with the idea that its presence would prolong his life till his son's arrival."

For an elaborate dissertation on the dove as a funeral bird and messenger of death, see Prof. Gubernatis' "Zoological Mythology," ii. 296—306.

In Russia, according to Mr. Ralston ("Folk Tales," p. 181), pigeons are considered sacred to the Third Person of the Trinity, instead of Perun (the old thunder god); and so to this day they look upon the slaying of a pigeon as a great sin, one which will bring a murrain upon the herds of its perpetrator. Pigeons are supposed to bring good luck with them, and to insure the house

they haunt against fire. If a building does catch fire, a white pigeon will extinguish the flames if it is thrown among them ; on the other hand, the flying of a pigeon into the house through the window forebodes a conflagration.

It is believed in Venice that the pigeons which are fed daily in the Piazza di San Marco are connected with the prosperity of the city ; that they fly round it three times every day in honour of the Trinity ; and that the fact of their building and roosting on St. Mark's is a sign that the town will not be swallowed up by the sea.

There is an old saying "that he who is sprinkled with pigeon's blood will never die a natural death" ; referring to which Dr. Brewer says, "A sculptor, carrying home a bust of Charles I., stopped to rest on the way ; at the moment, a pigeon overhead was struck by a hawk, and the blood of the bird fell on the neck of the bust. The sculptor thought it ominous, and after the king was beheaded the saying became current."

Pigeons were applied by our ancestors "to draw the vapours from the head." See Dr. Downe's "Devotions upon Emergent Occasions" (Works, vol. iii., p. 550, Lond. 1839) ; and Mr. Secretary Pepys informs us that Queen Catherine, being dangerously ill, had pigeons put to her feet (Oct. 19th, 1663), as also had Mr. Joyce (Jan. 21st, 1667-8). Bishop Jeremy Taylor (Heber's edition, xii. 290) recommends the same treatment : "We cut living (!) pigeons in halves and apply them to the feet of men in fevers." This seems a homœopathic remedy, as the flesh of the bird was not accounted by the old mediciners good, when taken internally, for "those that be choleric or inclined to any fevers ; but to them which be phlegmatic and pure melancholy, they are very wholesome, and be easily digested" (Swan's "Speculum Mundi," 1643, p. 402). A French writer, quoted by M. Rolland (vi. 138), says "Un jeune pigeon placé sur la tête d'un mourant attire à lui et boit tout le mal, comme une victime expiatoire" (Lucas de Montigny, "Récits variés," p. 51). See Bogaerts, "Histoire civile et religieuse de la colombe" : Anvers, 1847.

From the time of the Fathers it was a common belief that pigeons had no gall. "Which if man could frame himself to be, the serpent's wisdome would not hurt him, nor lean-faced envie sojourn with him." (Speculum Mundi, p. 401.)

### 3. Proverbial sayings.

*a.* "A pigeon's pair," or Scottice "A doo's cleckin" (*i.e.* brood) ; spoken of a family of only two children, a boy and a girl, as the pigeon only lays two eggs. Hence the Queen says of Hamlet that, after his fit, he will be

> "as patient as the female dove
> When that her golden couplets are disclosed" (*i.e.* hatched).

*b.* "Who would hold his house very clean,
Ought lodge no priest nor pigeon therein."

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*Genus* TURTUR.

## TURTLEDOVE (*Turtur communis*).

1. This bird receives its name from its moaning song, resembling the words "turr-turr" ; to which Virgil refers in the line—

> "Nec *gemere* aeriâ cessabit turtur ab ulmo."

It is also called in Shropshire, Wrekin dove.

2. The dove as an emblem—

*a.* Of devoted affection.

From the old but erroneous idea that doves paired for life and were models of conjugal fidelity, we find frequent mention made of it, as a symbol of the above, in the poets. Hence, in *Troilus and Cressida*, Act iii., sc. 2, Troilus says—

"As true as steel, as plantage to the moon,
As sun to-day, as turtle to her mate."

And Sir Philip Sidney writes—

"Time doth work what no man knoweth,
Time doth us the subject prove;
With time still affection groweth
To the faithful turtledove."

It was believed also that the widowed dove would never drink again from any clear fount or spring, lest its own likeness, appearing on the surface of the water, should awake recollections of the mate it had lost.

*b.* Of innocence and purity.

Adopted by our Lord in the text "Be ye wise as serpents and harmless as doves." From this, as well as from the fact of the Holy Spirit appearing in its form, it was considered the Scriptural sign of the Third Person of the Blessed Trinity. On this account, also, saints were sometimes represented with this bird whispering in their ear words of Divine wisdom. So, in a painted window in the chapel of Lincoln College, Oxford, Elisha appears with a double-headed dove on his shoulder, referring to his petition to Elijah that a "double portion of his spirit might rest upon him."

Mahomet, says Sir Walter Raleigh ("History of the World," Book I., part i., c. 6) "adopted this idea. He had a dove he used to feed with seed out of his ear, which dove, when it was hungry, lighted on his shoulder and thrust its bill in for its accustomed meal, communicating, as his followers believed, past, present and coming events to the false prophet, and being the Holy Ghost under that form."

In the "Legend of the Sancgréal" we read that every Good Friday a dove descended from Heaven, bearing an offering which it laid before the holy vessel.

3. From its use as the symbol of the Holy Spirit, the dove is highly reverenced in Catholic countries. In Italy and Germany it is considered a sin to eat the bird, as also is the case in Russia; in Bohemia, no one kills it, as it is the special favourite of God, and considered to be a sure preservative from lightning.

In Swabia doves are much kept, so Bechstein informs us, from a belief that they are more predisposed than mankind to rheumatism, and that when this complaint visits a house, it attacks the birds rather than their owners.

In the Channel Islands the possession of pet doves is regarded to be, in the case of an engaged person, a preventive to the course of true love running smooth.

A dove legend, Mr. Jones declares, is attached to Breedon church in Leicestershire, which stands alone on the top of a high hill, with the village at its foot. They began building it within the village; but the site was changed, because, it was said, every night the stones laid during the day were carried up to the hill-top by doves.

There is a tradition in Haute Bretagne that the turtledove built Noah's ark. It is also believed to return to that province on Midsummer-day; and the

country-people tell the following story about it and the cuckoo. They say "that once upon a time, just at that season, the turtledove engaged the cuckoo to get in his hay. Unfortunately, whilst passing through a gate the latter stuck fast with his load, whereupon the dove began to abuse him, crying, 'Troue-troue-one!' The cuckoo, stung by these upbraidings, made such tremendous efforts that he broke his wing! Ever since this disaster he sings with his pinions outspread, while other birds have them closed, and as soon as he hears the turtledove, takes to flight as quickly as possible." (Sebillot, "Haute Bretagne," ii. 211.)

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*Order* GALLINÆ.

*Family* PHASIANIDÆ.

*Genus* PHASIANUS.

## PHEASANT (*Phasianus colchicus*).

1. The earliest mention of the occurrence of this bird in England, is, according to Mr. Harting ("Ornithology of Shakespeare," p. 211), to be found in a tract "De Inventione Sanctæ Crucis Nostræ in Monte Acuto, et de ductione ejusdem apud Waltham," edited from MSS. in the British Museum, and published in 1861. In one of these MSS., dated about 1177, the name of the pheasant occurs in a bill of fare prescribed by Harold for the canons' households, in 1059:—"Erant autem tales pitantiæ unicuique canonico: a festo Sancti Michaelis usque ad caput jejunii, aut xii. merulæ, aut ii. agauseæ, aut ii. perdices, *aut unus phasianus*, reliquis temporibus aut ancæ, aut gallinæ." When the pheasant was first preserved in England we cannot ascertain, but in the reign of Henry VIII. a proclamation was issued (1536) to "prevent the slaughter of partridges, pheasants, and herons from the palace of Westminster to St. Giles in the Fields, and from thence to Islington, Hampstead, Highgate and Hornsey Park"; and the same monarch reared pheasants at his palace at Eltham in large quantities, as appears from his "Privy Purse Expenses."

2. Oath on the pheasant.

This was of a similar character to the vows on the heron and swan (which see), only attended with more pomp and ceremony. Thus, in 1453, we find that Philip the Good, Duke of Burgundy, vowed, at a great feast at Lille, that he would go to the deliverance of Constantinople, which had recently fallen into the hands of the Turks. "In the midst of the banquet," says Gibbon ("Decline and Fall," ed. Smith, vol. viii., p. 183), "a gigantic Saracen entered the hall, leading a fictitious elephant with a castle on his back; a matron in a mourning robe, the symbol of Religion, was seen to issue from the castle; she deplored her oppression, and accused the slowness of her champions. The principal herald of the Golden Fleece advanced, bearing on his fist *a live pheasant*, which, according to the rites of chivalry, he presented to the Duke. At this extraordinary summons, Philip, a wise and aged prince, engaged his person and powers in the holy war against the Turks; his example was imitated by the barons and knights of the assembly: they swore to God, the Virgin, the ladies, and the *Pheasant*; and their particular vows were not less extravagant than the general sanction of their oath." However, in spite of these tremendous engagements, none of them ever stirred towards the performance of the vow!

As regards the origin of this oath on the pheasant (and peacock), M. La

Curne de Sainte Palaye writes, in his "Memoires sur l'ancienne Chevalerie," tom. i., 3e partie, pp. 184 *et seqq.* :—"Les nobles oiseaux (car on les qualifioit ainsi) répresentoient parfaitement, par l'éclat et la variété de leurs couleurs, la majesté des rois et les superbes habillements dont ces monarques étoient parés pour tenir ce que l'on nommoit *Tinel*, ou cour plenière. La chair du Paon ou du Faisan étoit, si l'on croit les vieux Romanciers, la nourriture particulière des preux et les amoureux. Leur plumage avoit été regardé par les Dames des circles de Provence comme le plus riche ornement dont elles puisant décorer les Troubadours ; elles en avoient tissu les Couronnes, qu'elles donnoient comme la recompense des talens poëtiques consacrés alors à célébrer la valeur et la galanterie." (See also Marchangy, "La France au XIVème Siècle," tom. i., p. 11.)

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*Genus* PERDIX.

## PARTRIDGE (*Perdix cinerea*)

(French *Perdrix.*)

1. The dialectical forms of this are

Patrick (West Riding ; Lancashire).
Pertrick (Aberdeen).
Pairtrick (East Lothian).
Paitrick (Ayrshire).

So Burns, in his lines on the death of Captain Henderson :—

"Mourn, ye wee sangsters of the wood !
Ye grouse that crop the heather bud !
Ye curlews calling through a clud !
Ye whistling plover !
And mourn, ye whirring paitrick brood !
He's gane for ever ! "

2. Partridges pair early in the year, hence the French proverb—

"Quand la Chandeleur (Feb. 2nd) est arriveé,
La perdrix grise est mariée."

And the Bohemians declare that "St. George (April 23rd) finds eggs in their nests."

The young are able to fly about three weeks after being hatched, and soon attain their full growth ; whence the saying :—

"A la Saint Réme (Oct. 1st)
Les perdreaux sont perdrix."

3. The flesh of no game bird is so delicate; only one point is wanting :—

"If the partridge had the woodcock's thigh
It would be the best bird that ever did fly."

In some districts of France, it is said, the weight of the partridges found on an estate is considered as a fair standard test of the productiveness of the soil and of the state of agricultural skill.

4. Folk lore of the partridge.

*a.* The Bohemians believe that the flight of a partridge over a house prognosticates its destruction by fire.

*b.* Aldrovandus asserts that tame partridges cry out loudly when poison is being prepared in the house.

*c.* Thiers, in his work on "Superstitions," vol. i., p. 274, declares that a sick man cannot die easily on a bed stuffed with the wing feathers of a partridge. In England, *pigeon* feathers are supposed to have the same property (see p. 168).

*d.* SS. Jerome and Augustine declare that Satan often assumes the form of a partridge.

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*Genus* COTURNIX.

**QUAIL** (*Coturnix communis*). Fr. *Caille.*

1. Names derived from its call-note.

Weet my feet (East Lothian; North of Ireland).
Wet my lip (West Norfolk).
Quick me dick (Oxfordshire).

Compare the French—

Paye tes dettes.
J'ai du blé; j'ai pas de sac (Berry).
Tres pour un; tres per un (Provence).

And the Swiss

Ta-tatataye.

2. Folk lore.

*a.* In Swabia the peasants infer the price of corn during the coming autumn from the number of times the quail utters in the fields its cry, which they say is "Sechs Paar Weck, sechs Paar Weck!" Thus, if it cries three times, corn will be three gulden a bushel. The same belief prevails in Tuscany, the centre and west of France, and Switzerland.

In the Department Ile-et Vilaine, there is a proverb—

"Plus la caille carcaille
Plus chère est la semaille."

While in Tyrol it is said that the number of years during which a youth will remain unmarried corresponds with the number of cries that the quail utters when first heard by him in the spring.

*b.* It was the quail who taught masons how to lay stones. A mason was about to build a wall, and did not know how to make a stone stand properly, when a quail behind him cried out, "Bout pour bout!" and so the mason knew how to place his stones. (Haute Bretagne.)

*c.* "The quail is the earliest bird of spring, and thus of the early morning; hence Ortygia (Quail land), is mentioned in some legends as the birthplace of Phœbus and Artemis, the sun-god and his sister. So, too, in the Teutonic myth of Iduna, Wuotan and all the Æsir lamented her when she was stolen away; the trees shed frozen tears, and the sun withdrew his face, until Loki

brought her back in the form of a quail." (Cox, "Mythology of the Aryan Nations," vol. ii., p. 298.)

### 3. Migration of quails.

There is an old legend, mentioned by Buffon, that the quails have a king to conduct their migrations, and that they select the corncrake for that office; not choosing one of themselves, for the reason that, upon reaching their destination, the first of the band usually falls a victim to some bird of prey that is awaiting their arrival. Aristotle says they are led by an owl. (See above, under "Eagle Owl," and also under "Corncrake.")

### 4. Origin of quails.

"A quail is a bird known to all; yet its nature is not easily known, for there is one thing concerning this unknown. For, when there are great storms upon the coasts of Libya Deserta the sea casts up great tunnies on the shore, and these breed worms for fourteen days, and grow to be as big as flies, then as locusts, which, being augmented in bigness, become birds called quails." (From "The Magick of Kirani, King of Persia," 1685.)

### 5. Properties of the quail.

"Dissolve the eyes of a quail, or a sea tench, with a little water in a glass vessel, for seven days, then add a little oil; put a little of this in the candle, or only anoint a rag, and light among the company, and they will look on themselves like devils on fire, so that every one will run his way.—In the sardonyx stone engrave a quail, and put under its feet a sea tench, and put a little of the aforesaid confection under the stone in the hollow of the ring, and no man shall see you if you do anything in the house; no, not if you should take anything away that is in the house." (*Id.*)

### 6. Flesh of the quail.

The flesh of the quail, though in high esteem in our own days, was supposed by ancient authors to be very heating and unwholesome, from the bird's fondness for poisonous plants. This was Pliny's opinion; and so Lucretius writes:—

"Præterea nobis veratrum est acre venenum
At capreis adipes et coturnicibus auget."
("De Rer. Nat.," vol. iv., p. 642.)

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*Family* TETRAONIDÆ.

*Genus* LAGOPUS.

**PTARMIGAN** (*Lagopus mutus*)—Gael. *Tarmachan.*

White game.
White grouse.
Grey ptarmigan.
Rock grouse.
White partridge.

## RED GROUSE (*Lagopus scoticus*).

1. Various names.

Red or brown ptarmigan.
Moor game, or Moor fowl.
Red game.
Poor wren.

2. *a.* The male bird is called
Gorcock, or Moorcock.

*b.* The female
Moorhen.

The Gaelic term for the male bird is *Coileach-fraoch—i.e.* heather cock ; and for the female *Cearc fraoch—i.e.* heather hen.

3. Cry of the grouse.

Sounds like the words 'Go, go, go, go back, go-o back !' But Mr. McGillivray ("British Birds," i., p. 181), says "that the Celts, naturally imagining the moorcock to speak Gaelic, interpret it as signifying—'Co, co, co, co, mo-chlaidh, mo-chlaidh !'—*i.e.* 'Who, who, who, who (goes there ?) my sword my sword !'"

Mr. Campbell, in his "West Highland Tales," i., p. 277, explains it thus :—This is what the hen says—

"Faic thus-a 'n la ud 's 'n la ud eile."

And the cock, with his deeper voice, replies—

"Faic thus-a 'n cnoc ud 's 'n cnoc ud eile."

(*i.e.* 'See thou younder day, and yon other day.
'See thou younder hill, and yon other hill.')

4. "The female of the red grouse always had the reputation of keeping away from the haunts of men : hence the rhyme,

'The muirhen has sworn by her tough skin
She sall never eat of the carle's win '—

but now she makes light of the oath." (Chambers' "Popular Rhymes," p 196.)

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*Genus* TETRAO.

## BLACK GROUSE (*Tetrao tetrix*).

1. Also called

Black game.
Heath fowl.
Heath poult.

2. *a.* The male bird is called

Black cock.
Heath cock.

*b.* The female

Grey hen.
Brown hen.
Heath hen.

3. By its crowing at dawn," says McGillivray, "the evil spirits of night are put to flight or deprived of their power."

### CAPERCAILZIE (*Tetrao urogallus*).

Also called

Cock of the wood.
Cock of the mountain.
Wood, or Great grouse.

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*Order* FULICARIÆ.

*Family* RALLIDÆ.

*Genus* RALLUS.

### WATER-RAIL (*Rallus aquaticus*).

1. Called "rail" from its harsh cry (Old Dutch *rallen*, short for *ratelen*, to rattle).

2. From its quiet, stealthy habit of running, it has the names

Velvet runner.
Brook runner.
Skitty (Somerset). From "skit," to slide.
Grey skit (Devon).
Skitty coot (Devon; Cornwall).
Skitty cock (Do.)

3. Various names.

Bilcock (North).
Brook ouzel.
Gutter cock (Cornwall).
Darcock.

*Genus* PORZANA.

## SPOTTED CRAKE (*Porzana maruetta*).

For "crake" see under Corn Crake.

Also called
Water crake.
Spotted rail.
Spotted water-hen.
Skitty, or Spotted skitty (Devon). See preceding, 2.

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*Genus* CREX.

## CORN CRAKE (*Crex pratensis*).

1. So called from its harsh cry; whence, and from high grass and corn being its favourite haunts, are derived

Creck, Cracker, or Craker (North; Salop).
Bean crake, or Bean cracker (South Pembroke).
Corn drake (North Riding).
Grass drake (West Riding).
Meadow drake (Notts).
Land drake (Salop).
Gorse duck.
Gallwell (? Gallinule) drake.
Corn scrack (Aberdeen).
Daker (Surrey).
Daker hen (Westmoreland).

The latter appellation has been derived from the Norwegian *Ager-hoene* (*i.e.* the cock of the field); Danish, *Aker-rixe* (*i.e.* King of the acre); but it seems most probable that it has its origin from the bird's cry.

Landrail (General).

Cf. *Rale de terre* (France).

2. Superstitions connected with the corn crake.

In the north of Scotland it is regarded as a "blessed bird," and ranks with the lark and red grouse. It is also believed not to leave the country, but to remain torpid during the winter. In Ireland the popular opinion is that it becomes a water rail.

Brehm, in "La Vie des Animaux," says that "country-people maintain that this bird governs and acts as a leader to the quails; and Greek hunters declare positively that a corn crake is at the head of each flock of quails." (See under Quail and Eagle Owl.) Hence the names *Roi des cailles* (France); *Re di quaglie* (Italy); *Rey de las codornices* (Spain); *Wachtelkönig* (Germany).

*Genus* GALLINULA.

**MOOR HEN** (*Gallinula chloropus*).

1. So called from the nature of its favourite haunts; whence also

Water hen.
Water rail.
Moat hen, or Marsh hen.
Morant — ? Moor-ent (Salop).
Stank hen, or Stankie (East Lothian).

"Stank" = a still pond or pool = *stagnum*.

2. Its short bob-tail has given it the names of

Cuddy.
Moor coot.
Kitty coot (Dorset). See under Coot.

3. Various names.

Nightbird (Sussex).

From its dark plumage.

Bilcock, or Bilter (North country).
Skitty (Somerset).

These two names are also applied to the water rail.

Dabchick (Salop). See under Little Grebe.

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*Genus* FULICA.

**COOT** (*Fulica atra*).

(From Welsh *cwta* = short. The Welsh name for the bird is *Cwta-iar*—*i.e.* Bob-tailed hen.)

1. From the white bare spot above the bird's bill it is called

Bell kite—*i.e.* Bald coot (Scotland generally).
Bald duck, or Bald coot (Somerset).
Bel poot—*i.e.* Bald-powt, or -fowl (East Lothian).
Smyth (Orkney Isles).

From Icel. *Snaud-ur* = bare; Old German *Snoed*.

White-faced diver (Ireland).

2. Various names.
Black diver (Ireland).
Water crow (Dumfries).

From its black plumage. Cf. *Diable de mar* (Provence).

Whistling duck (Renfrew).
Queet.
? *i.q.* Coot. Cf. *Queute* (Seine Inférieure).

3. Coot custard fair.

At Horsey, in Norfolk, a fair used to be held every spring called Coot custard fair, because all the sweets were made from eggs of the coot and black-headed gull (Stevenson).

4. Proverbial sayings.

*a.* "As bald as a coot." (See above, 1.)
*b.* "As mad as a coot." (Cornwall.)

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*Order* LIMICOLÆ.

*Family* ŒDICNEMIDÆ

*Genus* ŒDICNEMUS.

## STONE CURLEW (*Œdicnemus scolopax*).

So called from its frequenting stony localities and uttering a cry resembling the sound of the word "curlui." Cf. *Courli* (Normandy), *Courlis de terre* (Côte d'Or).

1. The knees of this bird, when young, have a thick or swelled appearance; hence its names

Thick knee.
Thick-kneed bustard.
And the Latin title, *Œdicnemus*.

2. Various names.

Norfolk plover.
Great plover.
Stone plover.
Bustard.

*Family* CHARADRIIDÆ.

*Genus* CHARADRIUS.

## GOLDEN PLOVER (*Charadrius pluvialis*).

The French term *pluvier* (whence our name, Plover), is applied to these birds, according to Littré, because they arrive in flocks in the rainy season. Another authority considers that they are so called "parce-qu'on les prend mieux en temps pluvieux qu'en nulle autre saison," while the old English naturalist Charleton says that the epithet *pluvialis* is given "quia loca imbribus madida et paludes frequentat" ("Onomast. Zoic.," p. 109 : 1668).

1. From the colour of the plumage, which varies according to age and the season of the year, they are called

Grey plover (Ireland).
Yellow plover (East Lothian).
Black-breasted plover (Ireland).

From the colour of the breast in summer.

2. Various names.

Whistling plover (Norfolk ; Renfrew).

From its soft clear call.

"And in the plover's shrilly strain,
The signal whistle 's heard again."
("Lady of the Lake," Cant. V., stanza xi.)

Burns also speaks of

"The deep-toned plover gray, wild whistling on the hill."

Hill plover (Forfar).
Plover (Roxburgh).
The Gaelic name for the golden plover is *feadagh*.

3. Superstitions attached to the golden plover.

(*a*) In the Middle Ages it was believed that the plover lived on the wind. (See Littré, *sub* "Pluvier.")

(*b*) The Seven Whistlers. (See also under Redwing, Curlew, Wild Goose.)

"One evening, a few years ago, when crossing one of our Lancashire moors, in company with an intelligent old man, we were suddenly startled by the whistling overhead of a covey of plovers. My companion remarked that, when a boy, the old people considered such a circumstance a bad omen, 'as the person who heard the *wandering Jews*,' as he called the plovers, 'was sure to be overtaken with some ill-luck.' On questioning my friend on the name given to the birds, he said, 'There is a tradition that they contain the souls of those Jews who assisted at the Crucifixion, and in consequence were doomed to float in the air for ever!' When we arrived at the foot of the moor, a coach, by which I had hoped to complete my journey, had already left its station, thereby causing me to finish the distance on foot. The old man reminded me of the omen." (Mr. Jas. Pearson, *Notes and Queries*, Ser. IV., vol. viii., p. 268.)

The Leicestershire colliers also believe that the cry of the Seven Whistlers warns them of some calamity, and, on hearing it, refuse to descend into the pit till the next day. It is said that they were heard before the great Hartley colliery explosion, and also that at Wigan.

In South Shropshire and Worcestershire the Seven Whistlers are considered to be "seven birds, and the six fly about continually together looking for the seventh, and when they find him the world will come to an end" ("Shropshire Folk Lore," p. 232).

The superstitions connected with the Seven Whistlers are interwoven with the Gabriel Hounds and Odin's Spectre Hunt, for a full account and explanation of which see Mr. Baring Gould's most interesting work, "Iceland, its Scenes and Sagas," pp. 199, 203.

*c.* The Saviour and the golden plovers.

"Once on a Sabbath, Christ, in company with other Jewish children, amused Himself in fashioning birds out of clay.

"After that the children had amused themselves awhile herewith, one of the Sadducees chanced to come up to them. He was very old and very zealous, and he rebuked the children for spending their Sabbath in so profane an employment. And he let it not rest at chiding alone, but went to the clay birds and broke them all, to the great grief of the children.

"Now, when Christ saw this, He waved His hands over all the birds He had fashioned, and they became forthwith alive, and soared up into the heavens.

"And these birds are the golden plovers, whose note 'dcerrin' sounds like to the Iceland word 'dyrdhin,' namely, 'glory': for these birds sing praise to their Lord, for in that He mercifully saved them from the merciless hand of the Sadducee."

(Quoted by B. Harris Cooper, in his "Apocryphal Gospels," Introduction, p. xxxii.)

(*d*) In Scotland it is said that the Golden plover, in the spring time, continually gives in its song this advice to the labourer, "Pleugh weel, shave (*i.e.* sow) weel, harrow weel" (Aberdeen).

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*Genus* SQUATAROLA.

## GREY PLOVER (*Squatarola helvetica*).

1. Called grey from its winter plumage, which is grey above and white below, whence also

Grey sandpiper (obsolete).

2. Its habit of frequenting the sea-shore has obtained for it the names

Sea plover.
Sea cock (Waterford).
Strand plover (Cork).
Mud plover.
Stone plover (North and South Ireland).
Rock plover (Wexford).

3. Also called

Whistling plover.
Bull head.

From the round shape of the head.

Swiss sandpiper.

Cf. *Pluvier*, or *Vanneau Suisse* (France). So called because M. de Réaumur first received specimens from Switzerland.

4. Muffett, in his "Health's Improvement," quotes a proverb, "A grey plover cannot please him," as applied to a discontented person, which shows that the bird was highly esteemed as food. (Phipson.)

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*Genus* ÆGIALITIS.

## RINGED PLOVER (*Ægialitis hiaticula*).

1. So called from its white collar; whence also

Ring dotterel.
Ringlestone (Norfolk; Sir Thos. Browne).

Cf. *Blanc collet* (Savoie).

2. From the localities in which it is found this bird derives the names

Sea or Sand lark (General).
Sandy loo.
Sandy laverock (Orkney, Shetland Isles).
Sea dotterel (obsolete).
Stonehatch (Norfolk).
Stone runner (do.)
Stone plover (General).

Referring to its habit of pecking and searching among the pebbles above high-water mark.

3. Various names.

Dulwilly.
Bull's eye (Ireland).

From its large prominent black eye.

Knot (Belfast).
Grundling—*i.e.* Groundling (Lancashire).

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*Genus* EUDROMIAS.

## DOTTEREL (*Eudromias morinellus*).

1. The English and Latin names, *dotterel* and *morinellus*, are both expressive of stupidity. The former is derived from "dote,"

French *radoter*, and is the same as *dolt* or *dotard*. The latter is the Latin diminutive of μῶρος, a fool. The Highlanders call this bird *An tamadan mointich*, which means "peat-bog fool."

2. Various names.

Stone runner (Norfolk).
Dot plover (do.)
Wind (South of England).

3. Weather prognostic.

"When dotterel do first appear,
It shows that frost is very near;
But when that dotterel do go,
Then you may look for heavy snow." (Wiltshire.)

4. Superstitions regarding the dotterel.

"It is a silly bird," says Willoughby, "but as an article of food a great delicacy. It is caught in the night by lamplight, in accordance with the movements of the fowler. For if he stretch out his arm the bird extends a wing; if he a leg, the bird does the same. In short, whatever the fowler does the dotterel does the same. And so intent is it on the movements of its pursuer, that it is unawares entangled in the net." Drayton refers to this in the lines—

"The dotterel, which we think a very dainty dish,
Whose taking makes such sport, as no man more could wish:
For as you creep, or cower, or lie, or stoop, or go,
So marking you with care the apish bird doth do;
And acting everything, doth never mark the net,
Till he be in the snare which men for him have set."
(Song 25, p. 1164.)

And Beaumont and Fletcher—

"See, they stretch out their legs like dotterels."
(*Sea Voyage*, Act iii.)

While Ben Jonson writes:

"Bid him put off his hopes of straw, and leave
To spread his nets in view thus. Though they take
Master Fitz-dottrel, I am no such foul,
Nor, fair one, tell him, will be had with stalking."
(*The Devil is an Ass*, Act ii., sc. 1.)

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*Genus* VANELLUS.

## LAPWING (*Vanellus vulgaris*).

A.-S. *hleáp-wince-lit*, one who turns about in running; from A.-S. *hleáp-an*, to run, and *wince*, one who turns. Other forms of which are

Lipwingle (Beds).

Lymptwigg (Exmoor).
Flopwing.

2. From its wailing cry this bird has received the following names:—

Peewit (general).
Piewipe, Peweep (Norfolk).
Puit (Essex; Suffolk; Norfolk; Sussex).
Peaseweep (Stirling; Forfar).

Hence the children's rhyme—

"Pease weep, pease weep,
Harry my nest and gar me greet."

Weep or Wype.
Tewhit or Tee-wheep (Kirkcudbright; Orkney Isles).
Teufit (Cleveland).
Teuchit (Forfar).
Tuet (Westmoreland; Lancashire; West Riding).
Teeuck.
Tieves nicket, or Tieves geit (Shetland Isles).

Cf. *Dix-huit* (France); *Kiebitz*, *Kiwitt* (Germany).

Phillipene (Ireland).

3. Also called

Hornpie (Norfolk; East Suffolk).
Horneywink (Cornwall).

From the long crest, like a horn, projecting from the back of its head.

Cf. the Gaelic name *Adharcan-luachrach* (*i.e.* little horn of the rushes).

Green plover (Ireland).
Cornwillen (Cornwall).
Old maid (Worcestershire).

This name appears to be connected with the Danish legend given by Mr. Atkinson in *Notes and Queries*, Ser. III., x. 49, who says, quoting Molbech's "Danish Dialect Lexicon," that in one district of Denmark the pease-weeps are held to be metamorphosed old maids, the extinct old bachelors being still to be found in the form of green sandpipers. The former fly restlessly about the bogs and moors, which are the common dwelling-places of themselves and the sandpipers, pitifully and unceasingly exclaiming, "Hvi vi' do it? hvi vi' do it?" ('Oh! why wouldn't you?') Whereupon the sandpipers (to whom the plaintive question is addressed) in their turn, and on the wing too, reply "Fo we turr it, fo we turr it" ('because we dare not'), with the closing peal of insulting laughter, "Haa! ho! hoa!" which is constantly heard from the birds in question.

4. Habits of the lapwing.

The young of the lapwing run directly they are hatched; hence the saying—generally used to express great forwardness—that "the lapwing runs with the

shell on his head." This is said by Horatio of Osric (see *Hamlet*, Act v., sc. 2), and Ben Jonson quotes it in his *Staple of News*, Act iii., sc. 2:

> "Such as are bald and barren beyond hope
> Are to be separated and set by
> For ushers to old countesses ; and coachmen
> To mount their boxes reverently, and drive
> Like lapwings with a shell upon their heads
> Thorow the streets."

On which Nares remarks that the bald head being uncovered would give them that appearance. During the season of incubation, the cock bird tries to draw pursuers from the nest by wheeling round them, crying and screaming, to divert their attention. To this habit Shakespeare alludes in the *Comedy of Errors*, Act iv., sc. 2.

> "Far from her nest the lapwing screams away,"

while the female sits close on the nest till disturbed, when she runs off, feigning lameness, or flaps about near the ground, as if she had a broken wing. So in *Much Ado about Nothing*, Act iii., sc. 1.

> "Look where Beatrice, like a lapwing, runs
> Close by the ground to hear our conference."

5. The lapwing is almost universally held in bad esteem (except for its flesh and eggs), as is shown by the various titles and legends in which it plays a part. Mr. Atkinson, in *Notes and Queries*, Ser. III., vol. x., p. 49, mentions the two following as being current in Denmark.

"When our Lord was a wee bairn He took a walk out one day, and came to an old crone who was busy baking. She desired Him to go and split her a little wood for the oven, and she would give Him a new cake for His trouble. He did as He was bid, and the old woman went on with her occupation, sundering a very small portion of the dough for the promised recompense. But when the batch was drawn this cake was equally large with the rest. So she took a new morsel of the dough, still less than before, and made and baked another cake, but with the like result. Hereupon she broke out with 'That's a vast over-muckle cake for the likes o' you ; thee's get thy cake anither time.' When our Lord saw her evil disposition His wrath was stirred, and He said to the woman, 'I split your wood as you asked me, and you would not so much as give me the little cake you promised me. Now you shall go and cleave wood, and that, too, as long as the world endures !' With that He changed her into a weep (*vipa*). So the weep fares betwixt heaven and earth as long as the world lasts ; and fare where she will, she says other words never, save 'Klyf ved ! klyf ved !' (cleave wood ! cleave wood !)"

"While as our Lord hung yet upon the cross, there came three birds flying over. The first was the stork, who cried 'Styrk ham ! styrk ham !' (strengthen Him) ; and hence the bird's name and the blessings which go with her. The second cried, 'Sval ham ! sval ham !' (cool or refresh Him) ; so she came to be called the swallow, and is also a bird of blessing. But the last was the weep, who shrieked 'Pün ham ! pün ham !' (pine Him, make Him suffer), and therefore she is accursed for ever down to the last day." (Thiele's "Danish Traditions," ii. 304.)

With this may be compared the Russian legend given by Mr. Ralston (see page 61), who also quotes the following from Tereschenko's "Buit Russkago Naroda" ('Manners and Customs of the Russian People'), v. 47.

When God created the earth, and determined to supply it with seas, lakes, and rivers, He ordered the birds to convey the waters to their appointed places. They all obeyed except this bird, which refused to fulfil its duty, saying that it had no need of seas, lakes or rivers, to slake its thirst. Then the Lord waxed wroth, and forbade it and its posterity ever to approach a sea or stream, allowing it to quench its thirst with that water only which remains in hollows and among stones after rain. From that time it has never ceased its wailing cry of "Peet-peet"—*i.e.*, 'drink, drink.' (See above, under Green Woodpecker and Kite.)

In Sweden it is believed that the lapwing was once a handmaiden of the Virgin Mary, who stole the scissors of her mistress, and as a punishment was transformed into a bird bearing a tail forked like a pair of scissors, and incessantly uttering the cry, "Tyvit, tyvit"—*i.e.* ('I stole them, I stole them.') Mortanus tells us that in some parts of Germany this bird is called "the Virgin Mary's dove."

In the south of Scotland the peasantry bear it a traditional antipathy, arising from the raids upon the Covenanters by Claverhouse and Dalyell of Binns, whose troopers were directed to their hiding-places by its cries of alarm. Hence its name of "the ungrateful bird." Leyden alludes to this in the lines

> "And though the pitying sun withdraws his light,
> The lapwing's clamorous whoop attends their flight;
> Pursues their steps where'er the wanderers go,
> Till the shrill scream betray them to the foe.
> Poor bird! where'er the wandering swain intrudes,
> On thy bleak heaths and desert solitudes,
> He curses still thy scream and clamorous tongue,
> And crushes with his foot thy moulting young."

A legend of a different character is given by Yarrell, vol. ii., p. 483, which tells us how the founder of the ancient Lincolnshire family of the Tyrwhitts, having fallen wounded in a morass during a skirmish, would have perished had not the cries of the lapwings hovering over him attracted his followers to the spot. In memory of this deliverance he assumed three peewits as his device.

In Eastern story the lapwing is mentioned as having the power of finding water underground in the desert, to which Moore refers in the lines—

> "Fresh as the fountain underground
> When first 't is by the lapwing found." ("Lalla Rookh.")

While another poet has ascribed to the bird a vinous taste :—

> "The blackbird far its hues shall know,
> As lapwing knows the vine."

A Rabbinical legend, given at length by Mr. Baring Gould ("Old Testament Characters," vol. ii., p. 190), relates how this bird incurred the anger of Solomon by her non-appearance at an assembly of every species of fowl which he had convoked, and how she excused herself by relating her visit to the Queen of Sheba, as messenger to whose court the King afterwards despatched her. (See under Hoopoe, p. 107.)

Another Eastern tale respecting this bird is as follows: "The lapwing was once a princess, who hearing of the return of a favourite brother long absent, in her anxiety to meet him with some refreshment, snatched up a pot of hot milk from the fire, and placing it on her head, hurried out in the direction in which he was falsely said to be coming, heedless of the burn caused by the heated vessel. Unavailing for years she sought for this brother, calling out 'Brother, O brother!' until Allah, moved by compassion, gave her wings, and changed her into a lapwing, the better to accomplish her purpose; hence the bird is so often seen wheeling round in long flights, as if in quest of some one,

uttering a melancholy cry resembling 'Brother, O brother!' The Mohammedan women call the lapwing 'the sister of the brother,' and when they hear its cry in the evening, run from their houses and throw water in the air, that the bird may use it to assuage the pain of the burn on the top of the head, still marked by some black feathers."

(Jones, "Credibilities Past and Present," p. 382.)

The Tuchit's storm.

"Frequently," says McGillivray, "in the middle of March, storms come on with snow and hail, and this so commonly happens in the eastern districts of the middle division of Scotland (especially in Kincardine) that the people always expect what they call the 'Tuchit's storm' about the time of the arrival of that bird."

Lapwings laying in an easterly position.

"I have heard it affirmed that lapwings doe lay their eggs on the east side of a hill, and lett the sun hatch them: and that one has taken of the egges, and layd them in an east window and they were hatched, *sed quære de hoc*" (Royal Soc. M.S. Aubrey's "Nat. Hist. of Wilts," folio 161; quoted in Britten's edit. of his "Gentilisme and Judaisme," p. 259).

The lapwing has always been highly prized as a delicacy for the table. Thus the French have a proverb: —

"Qui n'a mangé grive ni yanneau
N'a jamais mangé bon morceau."

And in the neighbourhood of Nice they say—

"Se vuos mangeà de buoi mousseù
Mangea becassin, pluviè e vaneù."

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*Genus* STREPSILAS.

## TURNSTONE (*Strepsilas interpres*).

1. So called from the bird's habit of turning over small stones with its bill to get at the marine insects, etc., underneath them.

Cf. *Tourne pierre* (France); *Revuelve piedras* (Spain); *Volta pietre* (Italy); whence also

Stanepecker (Shetland Isles).
Tangle picker (Norfolk).

"Tangle is a kind of weed beset with small bladders." (Gurney).

2. Various names.

Sea dottrel (Norfolk).

Equivalent to the Welsh *Huttan-y-mor*.

Sea lark (Ireland).
Stone raw (Armagh).
Skirl crake (East Lothian; Shetland Isles).

Hence the Latin *interpres*, because it gives a warning cry to other birds on the approach of danger.

*Genus* HÆMATOPUS.

## OYSTER CATCHER (*Hæmatopus ostrilegus*).

1. So called from the bird's partiality to shell mollusca, whence also

Oyster plover.

Cf. *Huitrier* (France).

Mussel pecker (Belfast; Forfar).

2. From its deep black and pure white plumage, resembling that of the magpie, are derived the names

Pienet.

Sea pie (Cornwall; Norfolk; Lancashire; East Lothian).

Cf. *Pie de mer* (France).

Sea piet.

Sea pilot (corruption of preceding).

3. Various names.

Olive (Essex).

Tirma, Trillichan (Hebrides).

Chalder, Chaldrick (Orkney Isles). Obsolete.

Scolder (Orkney Isles).

From the loud shrill noise it makes when any one approaches its young.

Skeldrake or Skieldrake (Orkney Isles). See under Sheldrake.

Krocket (Aberdeen).

Dickie bird (Norfolk).

4. The oyster catcher's cry.

"Bi Glic, Bi Glic (*Bee Gleechk*)—'be wise'—say the oyster catchers, when a stranger comes near their haunts." (Campbell's "West Highland Tales," i. 275.)

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*Family* SCOLOPACIDÆ.

*Genus* RECURVIROSTRA.

## AVOCET (*Recurvirostra avocetta*).

1. From the peculiar shape of its long and pointed beak it has received the names of

Cobbler's awl, or Cobbler's awl duck.

Crooked bill.

Picarini.

2. Also called

Butterflip.
Scooper.

Because it scoops up the mud to obtain food.

Yelper.

From its sharp shrill cry.

Clinker.

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*Genus* SCOLOPAX.

## WOODCOCK (*Scolopax rusticula*).

1. (*a*) The prefix is often omitted, and the bird called simply "cock." So in German, *Waldschnepfe, Schnepfe.*

(*b*) From the length of its bill it has the name of Longbill.

Cf. *Bécasse* (France); *Beccaccia* (Italy).

(*c*) Called Quis in Wiltshire.

2. Arrival of the woodcock.

The earliest come about the 20th of October; hence the proverb—

"Cuckoo oats and woodcock hay
Make a farmer run away"

(*i.e.*, if the spring is so backward that the oats cannot be sown till the cuckoo is heard, or the autumn so wet that the after crop of hay cannot be gathered in till the woodcocks come over, the farmer is sure to come to great loss).

The French have the following sayings on the coming of this bird :—

(*a*) "A'la Saint François (October 14th)
La bécasse est au bois."
(*b*) "Quand arrive la Saint Denis (October 9)
Les bécasses sont au pays." (Poitou.)

(*c*) The Breton peasants say,

"Ala foire Saint Pol (October 10th) bécasse sur table."

In Prussia the passage of the woodcock occurs in spring, and the third Sunday in Lent is called Woodcock Sunday, hence the rhyme of the foresters—

"O-kuli-da kommen sie;
Lätare-ist das Wahre;
Judika-auch noch da;
Palmarum-rarum."

*Oculi* is the third Sunday in Lent, from the Introit, taken from Psalm xxv. 14; *Lätare* (*i.e. Lætare*) is the following Sunday, the Introit for which is Isaiah lxvi. 10. *Judica* is Passion Sunday, Introit Psalm xliii. 1; *Palmarum*, Palm Sunday.

### 3. Woodcock as prognosticating the weather.

"Woodcocks," says Gilbert White, "have been observed to be remarkably listless against snowy, foul weather." Their early arrival and continued abode, according to Phillips, are signs of plenty :

> "The woodcock's early visit, and abode
> For long continuance in our temperate clime,
> Foretells a liberal harvest."

### 4. Stupidity of the woodcock.

The woodcock was supposed to have no brains ; hence its name, says Harting, became a synonym for a fool. This is mentioned by Willoughby in his "Ornithology" (iii. 1, § 1), who, however, gives no reason for the bird's ill repute. Among us in England, this bird is infamous for its simplicity or folly ; so that a *Woodcock* is proverbially used for a simple, foolish person. It is to this that Claudio alludes when he says,

> "Shall I not find a woodcock too ?"
> (*Much Ado about Nothing*, Act v., sc. 1).

In France "bécasse" has become synonymous with a noodle, and "bider la bécasse" is equivalent to making a fool of any one. It has been suggested that the bird acquired this character from the facility with which it was taken in springes and nets. "Springes for Woodcockes" was part of the title of an old book of epigrams, by H. Perrot ; and in Beaumont and Fletcher's *Loyal Subject*, Act iv., sc. 4, we find

> "Go, like the woodcock,
> And thrust your head into the noose."

### 5. Time of feeding.

It is about twilight that the woodcock begins to stir and repairs to its feeding ground, flying generally low, and making for the nearest open passage in the wood. In these passages, which were called "cock-shoots," the fowlers used to set nets suspended between two poles, against which the birds flew, and were entrapped. Hence, "cockshut time," of which Shakespeare speaks, *Richard III.*, Act v., sc. 3, is the evening, when the woodcocks run or fly out of the covers, and are caught in the nets.

6. In the time of the Elizabethan dramatists, tobacco pipes were often called "woodcock's heads," from their likeness to the bird's head and bill. So Ben Jonson writes in *Every Man out of his Humour*, Act iii., sc. 3 :—

"*Fastid.* Will your ladyship take any ?

"*Savolina.* O peace, I pray thee ! I love not the breath of a woodcock's head.

"*Fastid.* Meaning *my* head, lady ? (See above, 1.)

"*Savolina.* Not altogether so, sir ; but as it were fatal to their follies that think to grace themselves with taking tobacco, when they want better entertainment, you see your pipe bears the true form of a woodcock's head.

"*Fastid.* O rare similitude !"

7. In some parts of the West-country it is believed that in peculiarly favourite spots a certain number of woodcocks is always found—that, in short, whenever any of the birds are shot, the same number as before is made up again.

8. Migration of woodcocks to the moon.

This was an old belief, current even in the last century. So Pope writes :—

"Know God and nature only are the same,
In man the judgment shoots at higher game,
A bird of passage gone as soon as found,
Now in the moon perhaps, now underground."

And Gay, in the "Shepherd's Walk :"—

"He sung where woodcocks in the summer feed,
And in what climates they renew their breed:
Some think to northern coasts their flight they tend,
Or to the moon in midnight hours ascend."

The reason for this extraordinary supposition is given in a tract contained in the "Harleian Miscellany," ii. 583: "An Inquiry into the Physical and Literal Sense of that Scripture—'Yea, the stork in the heaven knoweth her appointed times : and the turtle and the crane and the swallow observe the time of their coming' (Jeremiah viii. 7)." The author thinks that if storks and other migrating birds winged their flight, at their periods of migration, in a horizontal direction, they must have been observed by travellers ; therefore he argues "that the stork, and the like may be said of other season-observing birds, till some place more fit can be assigned to them, does go unto, and remain in some one of the celestial bodies, and that must be the moon, which is most likely because nearest, and bearing most relation to this our earth, as appears in the Copernican system : yet is the distance great enough to denominate the passage thither an itineration or journey." He further proceeds to state that the birds occupied two months in their upward and the same in their downward flight, while they remained three months in the lunar world.

The same writer remarks, with reference to woodcocks, that "in them it is remarkable that upon a change of the wind to the east, about Allhallows tide, they will seem to have come all in a night ; for though the former day none are to be found, yet the next morning they will be in every bush. I speak of the West of England, where they are most plentiful."

(For "Woodcock pilot" see above, under Goldcrest, p. 25).

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*Genus* GALLINAGO.

## GREAT SNIPE (*Gallinago major*).

Snipe, from Icel. *snipa*, akin to Dutch *snip*, a snapper. Called also double snipe, from its size.

Cf. *Bécassine double* (France); *Dobbelt bekann* (Norway).

Solitary snipe.
Little woodcock, Woodcock snipe (Ireland).

## COMMON SNIPE (*Gallinago cælestis*).

1. The peculiar drumming noise, caused by the rapid action of

the wings, when making a downward stoop, has obtained for this bird the names

Heather bleater (Scotland ; Ireland).
Bog bleater (Ireland).
Ern bleater.
Horse gowk, or gawk (Orkney and Shetland Isles).

Because the drumming is supposed to resemble the neighing of a horse. Pontoppidan, speaking of this noise, says, "The horse-gjög is as big as a magpie ; it does not cry 'cuckoo' like another cuckoo, but bleats like a goat, wherefore it has been called by some persons jord-geed=*capreolus.*"

The Scotch, Irish, and Welsh names for it all signify "air goat."

Cf. *Chèvre volante, Chèvre céleste* (France), *Himmelziege* (Germany).

With reference to the above names for this bird, Grimm ("Deutsche Mythologie," i. 184, Eng. transl.) writes :—"Apparently some names of the snipe have to do with this subject—*i.e.*, with the God Thunar or Donar, *Donnerziege* (-goat), *Donnerstagspferd* ('Thursday horse'), *Himmelsziege* (*Capella cœlestis*), because he seems to bleat or whinny in the sky (?) But he is also the Weather bird, Storm bird, Rain bird, and his flight betokens an approaching thunderstorm. Dan. *Myrehest*, Swed. *Horsgjök*, Icel. *Hross-agaukr*, horsegowk or cuckoo, from his neighing. The first time he is heard in the year he prognosticates to men their fate (Biorn, *sub voc.*) ; evidently superstitious fancies cling to the bird. His Lettish name, *pehrkonakaza, pehrkona ahsis* (thunder's she-goat and he-goat) agrees exactly with the German. In Lithuanian, too, Mielcke (i. 294, ii. 271) gives *Perkuno ozhys* as Heaven's goat, for which another name is *tikkutis.*"

2. Various names.

Snipe.
Jill snipe (Ireland). See under Jack Snipe.
Whole snipe.

As distinguished from the smaller Jack snipe.

Mire snipe (Aberdeen).
Snippack (Shetland Isles).

3. Superstition concerning the snipe.

In some parts of France the female snipe is believed to be the devil's wife.

4. Weather prognostic.

The drumming of the snipe in the air indicates dry weather and frost at night to the shepherds of Garrow (Scotland).

5. Proverbial sayings.

There is winter enough for the snipe and woodcock too.

The snipe is accounted very delicate eating, hence the old French quatrain :—

"Le bécasseau est de fort bon manger,
Duquel la chair resueille l'appetet,
Il est oyseau passager et petit,
Et par son goust fait des vins bien juger."

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*Genus* LIMNOCRYPTES.

### JACK SNIPE (*Limnocryptes gallinula*).

In Ireland this species is commonly believed to be the male of the common snipe; hence the latter is called Jill snipe, as distinguished from the former. Cf. *Jaquet* (Luxembourg).

Also called
Jedcock, Jid, or Juddock.
Half snipe (Norfolk).

From its small size, as contrasted with the whole, or common snipe. (See under "Whimbrel," p. 199.)

Gaverhale (Devon).

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*Genus* TRINGA.

### DUNLIN (*Tringa alpina*).

So called from its colour. Cf. *Brunette-Grizette* (France). Some derive the name from Gael. *dun*, a hill, and *linne*, a pool; because it frequents the dunes and pools by the seaside.

Various names.
Purre, or Churre (Norfolk).

Given to the dunlin when in winter plumage.

Ox bird, or Ox eye (Essex; Kent).
Stint (General).
Sea snipe (North of England; East Lothian).
Sea lark (North Ireland; East Lothian).
Summer snipe.
Jack snipe (Shetland Isles).
Plover's page (West Scotland).

Because so often seen in company with the golden plover.

Dorbie (Banff).
Pickerel (Scotland generally).

A name applied to all small waders.

Sea peek (Forfar).
Sea mouse (Lancashire; Dumfries).
Sand mouse (Westmoreland).
Bundie (Orkney Isles).
Ebb sleeper (Shetland Isles).

From these birds resting themselves in the shallows—*ebbs*; or from their posting themselves on the sand exposed by the ebbing tide.

## CURLEW SANDPIPER (*Tringa subarquata*).

Pigmy curlew (Norfolk).

## PURPLE SANDPIPER (*Tringa striata*).

So called from the prevailing bluish-grey colour of its plumage.

Various names.
Stanepecker (Shetland Isles).

Because its favourite haunts are rocks along the sea-shore, where it picks shell-fish from off the stones.

Blind Dorbie (North Shetland).
Red legs (Caermarthen).

## KNOT (*Tringa canutus*).

1. So called, according to Camden, in honour of King Canute, "for out of Denmark they are thought to fly hither." Drayton writes of it:—

"The knot, that called was Canutus' bird of old,
Of that great King of Danes, his name that still doth hold;
His appetite to please, that far and near was sought,
For him, as some have said, from Denmark hither brought." (Song xxv.)

Whence also
Gnat; Knat; Knet (Norfolk; Sir Thos. Browne).
Gnat snap.

"The little gnat-snap, worthy princes' boords" (Du Bartas, p. 45).

2. From the colour of its summer plumage it has received the names

Red sandpiper (Ireland).
Black sandpiper.

But the sober tints of its feathers in winter have caused it to be called

Dunne (Belfast Lough).
Ash-coloured sandpiper (Ireland).

Cf. *Tourterelle de mer* (Arcachon).

Grey plover (Scotland).
Silver plover (Do.).

3. Various names.
Sea snipe (Dublin).
Green-legged shank (Norfolk).
Male (Essex).
Howster.

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*Genus* MACHETES.

**RUFF** (*Machetes pugnax*).

Said to be so called from a frill of feathers the cock bird wears round his neck during the spring and early summer. The name of reeve is given to the female.

At the end of the sixteenth century we find these birds called "oxen and kine." *Vide* Introduction to "Expenses of the Judges of Assize, going the Western and Oxford circuits, between 1596 and 1601," reprinted in vol. xiv. of "Camden Miscellany," 1857; also Richard Carew's "Survey of Cornwall," 1602, p. 108. In Picardy the male is called *Paon*; the female, *Sotte*.

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*Genus* CALIDRIS.

**SANDERLING** (*Calidris arenaria*).

Also called
Sea lark (Ireland).
Sand lark.
Ox bird (Essex; Kent).
Stint.

These two latter names are given to the sanderling in common with the dunlin (*Tringa alpina*).

Ruddy plover.

The adult male in summer plumage.

Towwilly.
Curwillet (Cornwall).

Names given to the sanderling from its cry. Cf. Guerlette (*Seine Inférieure*).

*Genus* TRINGOIDES.

## COMMON SANDPIPER (*Tringoides hypoleucus*).

1. The piping note this bird utters when disturbed has given rise to its names of

Heather peeper (Aberdeen).
Watery pleeps (Orkney Isles).
Killieleepsie (East Lothian).
Kittie needie (Kirkcudbright).
Willy wicket (North of England generally).
Dickie-di-dee (Lancashire).
Tatler.
Weet weet.

Called, for the same reason, Skillili, by the Lapps, who have made, as Mr. Lloyd informs us, the following couplet on it :—

> "Skillili ! Skillili ! ! I carry, I carry,
> An egg large as that of a Ripa,
> So that my tail cocks in the air."

2. From its fondness for the sandy margin of lakes and rivers it is called

Sandie laverock.
Sand lark (Ireland ; Scotland generally).
Sanny—*i.e.* Sandie (Aberdeen).
Sand snipe (West Riding).
Shore snipe (Perth).
Water junket.
Water laverock (Roxburgh).

3. Various names.

Summer snipe (England ; Scotland generally).

Because it appears in April, and leaves again in September.

Skittery deacon (Stirling).

From a habit of the bird when rising to fly, on being suddenly alarmed.

Fiddler (Hebrides).

From the manner in which it continually vibrates its body, as if on a pivot.

Shad bird (neighbourhood of Shrewsbury).

"Before the erection of weirs at Worcester and other places on the Severn, shad used to ascend the river ; they came up about the middle of April, the time of the arrival of the common sandpiper ; and it is probable that the Severn fishermen, connecting the appearance of the bird with the advent of the shad-fishing season, gave to it the local appellation of shad-bird " (Jackson's " Shropshire Word-Book," p. 372).

Steenie pouter (Orkney Isles).
Bundie (Orkney Isles).
Land tripper (Kirkcudbright).

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*Genus* HELODROMAS.

**GREEN SANDPIPER** (*Helodromas ochropus*).

Also called
Summer snipe (Norfolk) : see under preceding.
Martin snipe (Do.)

"From the white base of its tail feathers forming such a contrast to its dark body as to give it the appearance of a house martin" (Stevenson, "Birds of Norfolk"). Cf. *Cul blanc* (France); hence the country-people in Haute Bretagne say, "When *les cu blancs* fly low, it is a sign of wind."

Horse gowk (Shetland Isles) : see "Common Snipe," 1.
Icel. *Hrossa-gaukr.*

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*Genus* TOTANUS.

**REDSHANK** (*Totanus calidris*).

1. So called from the bright red colour of its feet and legs; whence also
Red-leg (Norfolk).
Red-legged snipe.
Red-legged horseman.
Cf. *Chevalier à pieds rouges* (France).

2. From its loud and piercing alarm cry it has received the names
Teuk (Essex).
Clee.
Pellile (Aberdeen).
Watery pleeps (Orkney Isles).

3. Also called
Pool snipe.

From its partiality to ooze and marsh.

Sandcock.
Shake (Connemara).

From the constant nodding of its head while on the ground.

### GREENSHANK (*Totanus canescens*).

Also called
Green-legged horseman.

From the colour and extreme length of its legs. Cf. *Chevalier à pieds verts* (France).

Greater plover.

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*Genus* LIMOSA.

### BAR-TAILED GODWIT (*Limosa lapponica*).

1. From A.-S. *god* = good, and *wihta* = an animal; therefore the meaning is, a bird good to taste and eat (see below, 6). For the same reason it is called
Sea woodcock.
Godwin (Ireland).

2. From its sharp cry, uttered when taking wing, are derived the names
Yarwhelp, or Yarwhip.
Yardkeep.
Shrieker.
Poor Willie (East Lothian).

Their whistle resembling the utterance of these words.

3. From its similarity to the curlew in flight and colour of plumage, it is called

Half whaup (Forfar).
Half curlew (Norfolk).

Mr. Johns says that the Norfolk fishermen give it this name because it possesses half the value of the curlew? (But see "Whimbrel," 2.)

4. Various names.
Stone plover.
Pick (Norfolk).
Prine (Essex).

From its habit of probing the mud for food.

Scammel (Norfolk).

A name given to the female bird by the gunners of Blakeney. Fr. *scam*, which means a limpet (Stevenson, ii. 260).

Perhaps referred to by Shakespeare (*Tempest*, Act II., sc. ii.):—

"Sometimes I'll get thee
Young scammels from the rocks."

This seems preferable to the reading "sea mells" (*i.e.* sea mews), owing to the godwit being a greater dainty than the gull. (See Aldis Wright's "Notes to the *Tempest*," 1875, pp. 120-1 ; and, for another suggestion, Dyce's "Shakespeare," i., p. 245.

5. The gunners on Breydon water are accustomed to call the 12th of May Godwit day, as then those birds begin to move southward.

6. Godwits, as their name denotes, were much esteemed as an article of food. Sir Thomas Browne calls them "the daintiest dish in England," and Ben Jonson writes in *The Devil is an Ass*, iii. 3—

> "Your eating
> Pheasant and godwit here in London, haunting
> The globes and mermaids ; wedging in with lords
> Still at the table,"—

while Dr. Thomas Muffett writes ("Health's Improvement," p. 99), "A fat godwit is so fine and light meat, that noblemen, yea, and merchants, too, by your leave, stick not to buy them at four nobles a dozen."

### BLACK-TAILED GODWIT (*Limosa ægocephala*).

Also called
Red godwit (Ireland).
Small curlew.
Jadreka snipe.
Shrieker (Norfolk). See preceding, 2.

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*Genus* NUMENIUS.

### WHIMBREL (*Numenius phæopus*).

1. A name given to this bird from its peculiar call ; whence also Titterel (Sussex).

2. From its resemblance to a diminutive curlew it is called
Curlew Jack.
Curlew knot (Spalding).
Stone curlew.
Young curlew (Somerset).
Half bird, or Half curlew (Norfolk).
Cf. *Corlieu* (Bessin).
Little whaup (East Lothian).
Tang whaup (Shetland Isles).

From their being found among the tang or seaweed, searching for crustacea. (For whaup, see under Curlew.)

3. Because they appear in the month of May in greater numbers than at other times they have received the names of

May birds (Norfolk; Hebrides; Ireland).
May fowl (Ireland).
May curlew; May whaap (Ireland).

4. Various names.
Brame (East Suffolk).
Spowe (Norfolk): obsolete.

*Spoi* is the Icelandic name for the whimbrel. (Southwell, note in Lubbock's "Fauna of Norfolk," p. 100.)

## CURLEW (*Numenius arquata*).

1. This bird has two cries, viz.:

*a*. A whistle of two syllables, resembling the name Cur-lew; so the French *Courlis*, or *Corlu*; Sardinian, *Curruliu*; Maltese, *Gurlin*.

*b*. The other is harsher, and more guttural, hence the names
Whaup or Stock whaup; see below, 3.
Awp.
Great whaup (Orkney).
Cawdy mawdy (North Country).

2. Also called
Jack Curlew (Salop).
Curlew-help (Lancashire): obsolete.
Whitterick (East Lothian).

"In Norfolk," says Stevenson, "the females are called 'great harvest curlews,' from their size, and because the birds appear in the marshes about harvest time."

The Danish name is *regen-spaer*, because it speirs or foretells wet weather by its cry; for the same reason it is called in Germany, *Wind-* or *Wettervogel*. The same belief prevails in Derbyshire, according to Mr. Ratcliffe ("Long Ago," i. 304), who writes as follows: "I was out listening to the sounds of night birds, when a whistling (see below, 3) and a twittering overhead, something like the twittering of swallows, drew my attention. I inquired of a man who was passing the meaning of the (to me) unusual sound: 'Them's curlews,' he said; 'some folks calls 'em curlues; they're a-hoverin' about, and it falls to be that we'll hae some slushy weather when they hover soo low at nights'."

The Egyptian Arabs give it the title of "Karrawan," and say that its cry forms these words, addressing the Deity, "Lak, lak, lak, la shariah kalak, fi 'l mulk"—*i.e.*, 'to thee, to thee, to thee belongs the sovereignty of the world, without partner or comparison.' (St. John's "Village Life in Egypt," i. 344.)

3. Folk lore of the curlew.

The sad wailing cry of these birds, while on the wing, in the dark still nights of winter, resembling the moans of wandering spirits, is believed in

some parts of England to be a death warning, and called the cry of the Seven Whistlers. "I never thinks any good of them," said old Smith; "there's always an accident when they comes. They come over our heads all of a sudden, singing 'ewe, ewe,' and the men in the boat wanted to go back. It came on to rain and blow soon afterwards, and was an awful night, sir; and sure enough before morning a boat was upset, and seven poor fellows drowned. I know what makes the noise, sir; it's them long-billed curlews, but I never likes to hear them." (Buckland's "Curiosities of Natural History," series ii., 286, 287.)

Sometimes the cry is exactly like the yelping of a pack of hounds, and hence has engendered the belief in a ghostly huntsman attended by his dogs, who traverse the air during the night, bringing death and ruin to those who see them, and to the house over which they halt. They are called in Devonshire "Wish," or "Wisht hounds"; in the neighbourhood of Sheffield, "Gabriel hounds." (See under Redwing, Wild Goose, Golden Plover.) Much interesting matter respecting the "furious hosts" will be found in Grimm's "Deutsche Mythologie," iii., 918-50, Eng. ed.

It is to this that Bishop Mant refers in the lines

"Shouting loud
To warn their comrades of the way,
Lest darkling from the line they stray,
Wake the dull night with startling sounds;
Well might you deem the deep-mouthed hounds
Raised in full cry the huntsman's peal,
Or clamoured for their morning meal."

The Scotch name whaup or whaap, mentioned above, has been bestowed in Ayrshire on a goblin or evil spirit, who, according to Jamieson (*sub* "Quhaip") is supposed "to go about under the eaves of houses after the fall of night, having a long beak resembling a pair of tongs for the purpose of carrying off evil-doers. This is referred to by Sir Walter Scott in the "Black Dwarf," chap. ii., where Hobbie Elliott says to Earnscliff, "What needs I care for the Mucklestane Moor ony mair than ye do yoursel, Earnscliff? To be sure they say there's a sort of worricows and langnebbit things about the land, but what need I care for them?"

## 4. Proverbial sayings.

Curlews are extremely shy, and so easily alarmed that it is difficult to get within shot. Hence the Scotch saying that "to kill seven curlews, or whaups, is enough for a lifetime."

The flesh of the curlew is considered to be excellent eating—"lautissima," as Gesner says. Perhaps this epithet is rather too strong, but the bird always brings the price put on it by the old saying—

"Be she white or be she black,
The curlew has tenpence on her back" (Lincolnshire).

Another version of which is

"A curlew lean or a curlew fat
Carries twelvepence on her back."

*Order* GAVIÆ.

*Family* LARIDÆ.

*Sub-family* STERNINÆ.

*Genus* STERNA.

**ARCTIC TERN** (*Sterna macrura*).

Danish *Terne*; Swedish *Tarna*.

Tarrock (Shetland Isles).
Sparling (Lancashire).

A name given also to the Little Tern (*Sterna minuta*).

Jourongs (Galway).

"Signifying a cross and peevish disposition. So named from their habit of picking and biting themselves when wounded and thrown on the bottom of the boat" (Watters).

Skirr (Ireland).

From its cry.

Sea swallow (Ireland).

A name also given more generally to the common tern (which see).

**COMMON TERN** (*Sterna fluviatilis*).

1. Akin to Danish *Terne*, Swedish *Tarna*, are the names
Darr (Norfolk).
Starn (Do.).
Tarnie.
Pictarnie (East Lothian; Fife).
Tarret; Tarrock; Taring (Shetland Isles).
Piccatarrie (Shetland Isles).
Speikintares (Ross-shire).

2. The cry of the bird resembles the sound of the word "pirre," hence
Pirre, or Spurre (North of Ireland).
Skirr (Lambay Island).
Great purl (Norfolk).
Kirrmew.
Scraye.
Cf. *Plouvrê*; *Puveré* (Picardy).
Sparling, or Spurling (Lancashire).
Dippurl (Norfolk).

3. From the tail being elongated and forked like that of the swallow, and from its similar action on the wing, it has received the names

Sea swallow (General).
Shear tail (Orkney Isles).
Cf. *Hirondelle de mer* (France); *Golondrina de mar* (Spain).

4. Also called

Gull teaser (South Devon).

Because it pursues the lesser gulls till they disgorge their prey, which it seizes before reaching the water.

Picket-a (Orkney Isles).
Rixy (East Suffolk).
Miret (Cornwall).
Clett.
Kip.
Great tern.
Rittock, or Rippock (Orkney Isles).
From Icel. *rit-ur*.
Kingfisher (Lough Neagh).

From its darting flight.

Willie fisher (Forfar).
Pease crow.

"Called in Norway Mackerel tern, because it follows the shoals of mackerel in pursuit of the small fishes and marine insects which make for the surface of the water as the mackerel pass under them." (Bowden.)

5. In Ireland the bird's appearance is regarded as the harbinger of a good fishing season.

## ROSEATE TERN (*Sterna dougalli*).

Purre maw (Carrickfergus).

From their hoarse cry.

## LITTLE TERN (*Sterna minuta*).

1. From the bird's cry are derived the names

Skirr (Ireland).
Small purl (Norfolk).
Sparling (West Lancashire).

Where the eggs and young are called "sea mice."

2. Also called

Richel bird.
Little darr (Norfolk).

Shrimp catcher (Norfolk).
Fairy bird (Galway).

From its graceful movements.

Sea swallow (General).
Dip ears (Norfolk).
Little pickie (Forfar).
Hooded tern.

From the black crown and nape.

### SANDWICH TERN (*Sterna cantiaca*).

In the Farn Islands this species is called "the tern" *par excellence*, all other kinds having the name "sea swallows." (Selby.)

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*Genus* HYDROCHELIDON.

### BLACK TERN (*Hydrochelidon nigra*).

Also called
Stern.
Scare crow.

From its colour.

Blue darr (Norfolk).

"A corruption," says Mr. Johns, "of dorr-hawk, a name for the nightjar, which it resembles in its mode of flight and also in its food, feeding on beetles and other insects." (But see under Common Tern, 1.)

Car swallow (Cambridgeshire).

From its being found on marshes—"carrs."

Clover-footed gull.

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*Sub-family* LARINÆ.

### GULLS.

1. The name of gull appears to have been given to this family of birds from their wailing cry. (Corn. *Gullan*, Welsh, *Gwylan*; Breton, *Gwelan*; Italian, *Golano*; French, *Goeland*). Gull, as

applied to a dupe or a fool, means properly an unfledged bird. See "Halliwell's Dictionary," *sub voc.*, who quotes Wilbraham to the effect that all nestling birds in quite an unfledged state are so called in Cheshire.

2. Weather prognostics from gulls.

In Scotland and Ulster there is a common rhyme—

"Sea gull, sea gull, sit on the sand,
It's never good weather while you're on the land":

alluding to the fact that when gulls fly out early and far to seaward, or remain on the shore, fair weather may be expected; but, if they appear inland, storms generally follow. Sir Walter Scott, in the following lines ("Lay of the Last Minstrel," cant. vi.), refers to the approach of the storm being known to these birds :—

"Moor, moor the barge, ye gallant crew!
And, gentle ladye, deign to stay!
Rest thee in Castle Ravensheuch,
Nor tempt the stormy frith to-day.

"The blackening wave is edged with white:
To inch and rock the sea mews fly;
The fishers have heard the water-sprite
Whose screams forebode that wreck is nigh."

3. Folk lore.

The following curious narration is taken from Plot's "Natural History of Staffordshire," p. 231 (Oxford, 1686) :—"The strangest web-footed water fowle that frequents this county is the *Larus cinereus Ornithologi*, the *Larus cinereus tertius Aldrovandi*, and the *Cepphas* of Gesner and Turner—in some counties called the Black cap; in others, the Sea or Mire crow; here the Pewit, which, being of the migratory kind, came annually to certain pooles in the estate of the Right Worshipful Sir Charles Skrymsher, Knight, to build and breed, and to no other estate in, or neer, the county, but of this family to which they have belonged *ultra hominum memoriam*, and never moved from it, though they have changed their station often. They anciently came to the old pewit-poole above mentioned, about half a mile south-west of Norbury Church, but it being their strange quality (as the whole family will tell you, to whom I refer the reader for the following relation) to be disturbed and remove upon the death of the head of it, as they did within memory, upon the death of James Skrymsher, Esq., to Offley Moss, near Wood's Eyes, which Moss, though containing two gentlemen's lands, yet (which is very remarkable) the pewits did discern betwixt the one and the other, and build only on the land of the next heir, John Skrymsher, Esq., so wholly were they addicted to this family. At which Moss they continued about three years, and then removed to the old pewit-poole, again, where they continued to the death of the said John Skrymsher, Esq., which happening on the eve to our Lady Day, the very time when they are laying their eggs, yet so concerned were they at this gentleman's death, that notwithstanding this tie of the law of nature, which has ever been held to be universal and perpetual, they left their nests and eggs; and though they made some attempts of laying again at Offley Moss, yet they were still so disturbed that they bred not all that year. The next year after they went to Aqualat, to another gentleman's estate of the same family, where (though tempted to stay with all the care imaginable), yet continued there but two years, and then returned again to another poole of the next heir of John Skrymsher, deceased,

called Shebben-poole, in the parish of High Offley, where they continue to this day, and seem to be the propriety, as I may say (though a wild fowle), of the Right Worshipful Sir Charles Skrymsher, Knight, their present lord and master." (*Vid. sup., sub* Rook, pp. 87, 88.)

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*Genus* RISSA.

## KITTIWAKE (*Rissa tridactyla*).

1. So called from its cry, three notes uttered in quick succession; whence also

Kittie (East coast; Banff).

"Seeing some kitties flying about some swimming willocks" (see under Guillemot), "one evening, I was assured that the willock, after diving and coming up with a fish, presented it to the kitty, who flew down to receive it." ("East Anglian," iii. 352.)

Sea kittie (Norfolk; Suffolk).
Kishiefaik (Orkney Isles).
Killyweeack (Do.).
Keltie (Aberdeen).
Waeg (Shetland Isles).

Diminutive of (Kitti)wake.

2. Various names.

Cackareen.
Petrel (Flamborough Head).
Craa maa (Shetland Isles).
Annet.
Tarrock.

A name applied to the young before their first moult.

---

*Genus* LARUS.

## GLAUCOUS GULL (*Larus glaucus*).

So called from the white-frosted appearance of its feathers. By the Dutch sailors, so Scoresby tells us, the name of Burgomaster is given to this bird, either from its grave and majestic appearance, or because it is master of other sea fowl.

Also called
Golden maw (Stirling).
Iceland scorie (Shetland Isles).

A name only applied to the young gulls while speckled; they lose the speckled appearance after the first year. In Shetland the name "scorie" or "scaurie" is given to the young of any kind of gull.

## HERRING GULL (*Larus argentatus*).

Various names.

Silvery, *i.e.* Silvery-white, gull (Ireland).
Laughing gull (Belfast).
White maa (Shetland Isles).
Willie gow (East Lothian; Aberdeen).
Cat gull (Kirkcudbright).

"These birds are detested by the keepers, and have probably earned their name and character by their cat-like depredations amongst the newly-hatched young birds and eggs on the moors" (R. Service, in "Zoologist," 1878, p. 428). Mr. Harvie Brown suggests that the name is given from their cat-like voice.

## LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL (*Larus fuscus*).

Gray gull.
Said fool (Shetland Isles).

## COMMON GULL (*Larus canus*).

1. From A.-S. *Maew*, akin to Dutch *Meeuw*; Icel. *Már* (from the cry of the bird) are derived
Mew, or Sea mew (Scotland).
Maa, or Mar (Kirkcudbright).
Sea maw, or Sea mall (Scotland).
Small maa (Shetland Isles).
Sea mell (obsolete).

See under Bar-tailed Godwit, p. 198.

Blue maa (Shetland Isles).

From the bluish-ash of upper parts.

Winter mew.

2. Various names.
Gow—*i.q.* Gull (Aberdeen).
Cobb or Sea cobb (Kent; Essex; Suffolk; Norfolk).

Annet (Northumberland).
Winter bonnet.
Coddy moddy.
Barley bird (South Devon).

From the time of its appearance, at barley sowing.

Seed bird (Roxburgh ; Teviotdale).

From its habit of following the plough.

Green-billed gull.

## GREATER BLACK-BACKED GULL (*Larus marinus*).

1. From its black back are derived the names

Black back.
Black-and-white gull.
Swart back (Orkney Isles).
Swarbie (Shetland Isles).
Saddleback (Norfolk ; Lancashire).
Greater saddleback (Ireland).
Parson gull, or mew (Sussex ; Galway).

From the contrast of the black back with the snow white of the unde plumage.

2. Also called

Cobb (Essex ; Kent ; North Devon ; Wales ; Galway).

With reference to its large size.

Baagie (Shetland Isles).
Goose gull (Ireland).
Gray gull (Do.).
Gull maw—*i.e.* mew (East Lothian).
Carrion gull (Ireland).

Being particularly addicted to flesh.

Wagell gull.

A name applied to the young birds.

## BLACK-HEADED GULL (*Larus rudibundus*).

1. In summer, the head and upper part of the neck are a deep dark brown, hence the names

Black-headed gull.
Black cap, or Black head.

Brown-headed gull.
Hooded crow, or Hooded mew (Orkney Isles; East Lothian).

2. From the bright vermilion of its feet and legs it is called

Red-shank gull (Ireland).
Red-legged gull (Do.).
Red-legged pigeon mew (Norfolk).

Cf. *Pijoun de' mar* (South of France).

3. Its habit of going inland, and frequenting fields to feed on worms and larvæ in the newly-turned-up furrows, has caused the titles to be given to it of

Puit, or Peewit gull (Norfolk ; Staffordshire).
Sea crow.
Mire crow.

4. Local names.

Scoulton pie, or Scoulton peewit (Norfolk).

Scoulton Mere, in Norfolk, is a favourite breeding-place of these birds.

Potterton hen (Aberdeen).

From a loch of that name, now dried up. (J. Harvie Brown.)

Collochan gull (Kirkcudbright).

From a loch, so called. (R. Service, in "Zoologist," 1878, p. 428.)

5. Various names.

Crocker.
Bakie (Shetland Isles).
Pine, or Pine maw (Antrim).
Maddrick gull (Cornwall).
Sea maw, or Maw (Scotland).
Pick sea ; Pictarn ; Pickmire (Roxburgh).
Pickie burnet (Roxburgh).

A name for the young gulls, whose head is light brown, while the upper plumage is a darker shade of the same colour. Burnet = Fr. *Brunette.*

6. The fishermen about Finisterre say that if you hear the gulls cry "Caré—caré—caré," it is time to wind up (*caretter*) the lines, for you will have no sport.

---

*Sub-family* STERCORARIINÆ.

*Genus* STERCORARIUS.

**COMMON SKUA** (*Stercorarius catarrhactes*).

The skuas are so called from their sharp, shrill cry, which resembles the word skua or skui.

Various names.
Bonxie (Shetland Isles).
Herdsman (Orkney Isles).

Because it is believed to protect the young lambs from the attacks of the eagle.

Scull.
Black gull (Tralee Bay).
Black-toed gull.
Port Egmont hen.

A name given to this bird by sailors, from its being found in large flocks in the Falkland Isles.

Tom Hurry (Cornwall).
Tuliac.
Sea crow.
Brown gull.
Badock.

**RICHARDSON'S SKUA** (*Stercorarius crepidatus*).

1. Gulls, both large and small, when engaged in fishing, are pursued and harassed by these birds till they disgorge their prey. The skuas then catch what is dropped before it reaches the water. Hence the name

Teaser.

2. The following names are derived from the vulgar opinion that the gulls are *muting*, when, in reality, they are only disgorging fish newly caught.

Dirt bird (Dundrum Bay).
Skait bird (Old Scotch, from *Skit-a-cacare*).
S—e scouter, *i.e.* skeiter.
Scouty allan, or Scouty aulin (Orkney Isles).
Weese allan (Do.).

"Weese," from A.-S. *was*=moisture.

Dirty allan, or aulin (East Scotland).
Dung bird, or Dung hunter.

Cf. *Chasse merde* (France); *Struntjäger* (Germany).

3. Various names.

Arctic gull.
Man-of-war bird.
Black-toed gull (Moray).
Boatswain (North Scotland; Shetland Isles).
Shooi—*i.q.* Skua; from the bird's cry (Shetland Isles).
Trumpie (Orkney Isles).

---

*Order* TUBINARES.

*Family* PROCELLARIIDÆ.

*Genus* PROCELLARIA.

## STORM-PETREL (*Procellaria pelagica*).

The Petrel is so named from the French *pétrel*, a diminutive of *Pétre*, *i.e.* Peter; and the allusion is to the Apostle walking on the Sea of Galilee. Whilst skimming along the waves its legs hang down, and the feet seem to touch the water, presenting the appearance of walking.

1. From the belief that its appearance prognosticates stormy weather, it is held in abhorrence by sailors; hence the names

Stormy petrel.
Storm finch (Orkney Isles).
Witch, or Waterwitch.
Assilag (Hebrides).

From Gaelic *easchal*=a storm. Cf. *Oiseau du diable*, *Oiseau des tempêtes* (Picardy); *Satanite*, *Satanique* (Normandy).

2. Also called

Mitty.
Spency (Shetland Isles).
Alamonti (Orkney Isles).

"The name seems of Italian extract—from *ala*, a wing, and *monte*: the bird that still mounts or keeps on its wing, agreeing to a well known attribute of this animal." (Jamieson.)

Swallow (Shetland Isles).
Gourder, or Gourdal (Kerry).
Martin-oil (Galway).
Hornfinch.
Mother Carey's chicken.

I cannot discover a satisfactory reason for this name being given to the petrel. Two have been proposed—one in *Notes and Queries*, and the other in Mr. Yarrell's "British Birds," but neither seems probable. The latter says that

it was bestowed by Captain Carteret's sailors, from some unknown hag of that name. This appears rather far-fetched. The former suggests that Mother Carey = *Mater cara*, a name of the Blessed Virgin ; the idea being that these birds, giving friendly warning of storms at sea, may well be connected in the minds of sailors with her whom they invoke as their patroness. But, on the other hand, in no litany of the Virgin is the word *cara* applied to her : and the French Catholic sailors have very different names for the petrel—*e.g.*, *Oiseau du diable, Satanite, Satanique*. (See above, 1.) The Breton fishermen declare that petrels embody the souls of wicked captains who have ill-treated their crews and, as a punishment, are condemned to fly for ever over the deep. Others say that they are the souls of drowned sailors, imploring the prayers of the living ; or are sent from hell, and appear as "devil birds" (see above), gliding and hovering over the corpses of the lost. They were believed, in old days, to hatch their eggs under their wings, and bring their young ones with them. (See under Great Northern Diver, 3.) In East Anglia they are called Tom tailors by the Lowestoft and Yarmouth fishermen.

---

*Genus* PUFFINUS.

## MANX SHEARWATER (*Puffinus anglorum*).

So called from its flight, shearing or skimming the waves ; while the epithet Manx is applied because at one time it was found in great numbers on the coast of the Isle of Man ; whence Manx petrel or puffin.

1. From its hoarse guttural cry it has the names

Crew (Scilly Isles).
Cockathrodon (Do.).

2. Also called

Mackerel cock (Lambay Island).

Because it precedes the appearance of that fish on the east coast of Ireland.

Night bird (Skellig Islands).

Because it is only seen at night about the rock.

Lyre (Shetland and Orkney Isles).
Scraber (Hebrides).

Norwegian *skrabe*, or the scraper ; so called because it is said "to scrape a hole in the sand by the side of a large stone, where it makes its nest, but does not incubate after the fashion of other birds, for it sometimes lies with its belly on the eggs, at other times on its back!" (Bowden's "Naturalist in Norway," p. 190).

## GREATER SHEARWATER (*Puffinus major*).

Hackbolt (Scilly Islands).
Hagdown (Dungarvan ; Isle of Man).

---

*Genus* FULMARUS.

**FULMAR** (*Fulmarus glacialis*).

Fulmar, akin to *Foumart* = a polecat, and meaning a foul marten: from the peculiar and disagreeable odour of the bird, owing to the oil which it emits on being seized, and the rankness of its food. (Another derivation is from Icel. *Fole mar*, equivalent to the Danish name *Hav hest* (*i.e.* sea-horse), "because it is supposed, when breathing, to imitate the snorting of a horse, while the way in which it walks the water is considered to resemble a horse's gallop."—Bowden, p. 189.)

Called in the Shetland Isles, Malmock, Malduck, or Mallemock (*i.e.* Foolish fly), from its heedless habits.

In Newfoundland it has the name John Down.

---

*Order* PYGOPODES.

*Family* COLYMBIDÆ.

*Genus* COLYMBUS.

**GREAT NORTHERN DIVER** (*Colymbus glacialis*).

1. From Icel. *Lómr*, Swedish, Danish *Lom*, a loon, lubber, alluding to the awkward motion of diving birds on land, come the names

Loon, or Loom (general).
Ring-necked loon (East Lothian; Cork Harbour).

2. Also called

Great doucker, *i.e.* diver.
Cf. *Grand plongeur* (France).
Immer or Ember (Orkney Isles).
Imber diver (Ireland).
Ammer, or Emmer goose (Aberdeen; East Lothian).
Gunner.
Naak (Scotland).
Cobble.
Holland hawk (Ballantrae, Scotland).

The Gaelic name for the bird is *Mur bhuachaill*, or sea herdsman.

Called in Norway *Sislom*, or Ice loon, because it does not migrate, but remains on the water till the ice forms.

3. Folk lore.

"The peasants in Finmark," says Bowden (p. 174), "believe that this bird was first made without legs, but that nature, becoming sensible of her mistake, got into a pet, and flung a pair of legs after it."

The Norwegians declare that they know when stormy weather is approaching, by the peculiar cry which the Immer then utters.

Bishop Pontoppidan says of it, "Its wings are so short, it can hardly raise itself with them; and its legs are so far back that they are not so much used to walk with, as to paddle along the water; on which account the Immer is never seen to come ashore, excepting in the week before Christmas, wherefore the fourth Sunday in Advent is called by the people Immer, or as the people express it, Ommer Sunday.

Pennant, in his "British Zoology," tells us that the Immer is thought to hatch its young in a hole formed by nature under the wing for that purpose; a belief prevalent in the Faroe Isles, according to the Rev. Lucas J. Debes, who says ("Description of Foeroe, Englished by John Storpen, 1674") that "the bird has two holes, one under each of its wings, capable to hold an egg, wherein they (the natives), suppose it hatcheth its eggs, till the young ones come out, neither is it ever seen with more or less than two young ones, which conceit seems not unreasonable."

## BLACK-THROATED DIVER (*Colymbus arcticus*).

Also called

Northern doucker.
Lumme (See under "Great Northern diver," 1).
Speckled loon.
Lesser imber.

This bird makes a great noise against rain, hence the Norwegians think it impious to destroy it.

## RED-THROATED DIVER (*Colymbus septentrionalis*).

1. The back and upper parts of this bird are of a dusky mouse colour, marked with small white spots; hence the names

Speckled diver: First speckled, and Second speckled diver.
Speckled loon.
Mag (*i.e.* Magpie) loon (Norfolk).

2. From its fondness for sprats it is called

Sprat borer, or loon (Essex).
Spratoon (Norfolk; East Lothian).

3. Various names—

Loon, or Lune (Devon; Cork; Wexford).
Loom (Shetland Isles). See under Great Northern Diver.
Rain goose (Caithness; Shetland Isles).

So called because its cry is considered to prognosticate rain.

Cobble.
Silver grebe (Kent). See under Great Crested Grebe.
Arran ake—*i.e.* auk (a name given to this bird about Luss in Dumbarton).
Burrian (Ballantrae).
Galrush (Dublin Bay).

4. When this bird is seen busied about the broken water along the coasts of Norfolk and Suffolk, the fishermen say it indicates where those engaged in 'long shore fishing had best try their luck: so the proverb runs:—

A loon in a wash
Is as good as a shilling in a poor man's purse.

---

*Family* PODICIPIDÆ.

*Genus* PODICEPS.

## GREAT CRESTED GREBE (*Podiceps cristatus*).

(Fr. *Grèbe*: named from its crest, from Breton *krib*, a comb. Cf. *gébron* (Grisons)

1. So called from the dusky crest, standing up on each side of the head; whence also

Crested doucker (East Lothian).
Horned doucker.

2. Various names.

Greater loon, or Loon (Norfolk; West of Ireland).
Grey, or ash-coloured loon.
Tippet, or satin grebe.

From the glossy, silky white skin of the breast being used by furriers for cape trimmings and tippets.

Ash-coloured swan.
Molrooken (Lough Neagh).
Arse foot (obsolete).
*i.q.* Dutch *arsvoote*; from the backward position of the legs.
Car goose.

From the bird's haunts, "carrs."

Gaunt (Lincolnshire).
A.-S. *Ganot*, a sea fowl.

## SCLAVONIAN GREBE (*Podiceps auritus*).

Also called

Horned grebe.
Dusky grebe.

A name given to it when in winter plumage.

*Genus* TACHYBAPTES.

## LITTLE GREBE (*Tachybaptes fluviatilis*).

1. From its diving propensities this bird is called

Diver (Renfrew).
Diedapper (Dorset; Hants; Norfolk).
Divedapper, or Divedop (Lincolnshire).
Divy duck (Norfolk).
Dive an' dop (Do.).
Doucker (Perthshire; Salop).
Jack doucker (Salop).
Small or Little doucker (East Lothian).
Dabchick, or Dobchick (general).
Dabber (Berks; Bucks).

2. Various names.

Black chin, or Black-chinned grebe (Berks).

So called when in summer plumage.

Spider diver.
Bonnetie (Forfar).
Penny bird (Lough Morne; Carrickfergus).
Drink a penny (Lough Strangford).
Willie Hawkie (Clough, Antrim).
Tom puddin' (Salop; Toome, Antrim).
Loon.
Arsefoot (see under Great Crested Grebe).
Mither o' the mawkins (Stirling).

*I.e.* Mother o' the hares = a witch, or uncanny person. "Applied, in one village, to the dabchick, from its diving capabilities and the way in which it suddenly disappears when pursued." (J. A. Harvie Brown.)

3. Shakespeare alludes to the bird in "Venus and Adonis":—

> "Like a dive dapper peering through a wave,
> Who, being look'd on, ducks as quickly in."

And Drayton, "Polyolbion," st. 25:—

> "The diving dobchick here among the rest you see,
> Now up, now down again, that hard it is to prove
> Whether under water most it liveth, or above."

*Family* ALCIDÆ.

*Genus* ALCA.

## RAZOR BILL (*Alca torda*).

1. From the Icel. *álka*, are derived the names

Auk, Alk, or Oke.
Falk, or Faik (Hebrides).
Bawkie (Orkney Isles).

2. Also called

Murre (Cornwall).
Marrott (East Lothian; Aberdeen).

Icel. *már*: from the cry of the bird.

Scout (Scotland; Farn Islands). See under Guillemot.
Sea crow (Orkney Isles).

From its black head and back.

Gurfel.
Puffin (Antrim).
Hellejay—? *i.q.* Hrogga (Shetland Isles).
Willock, or Willcock (Do.).

A name also applied to the Guillemot, which see.

3. From birds of the auk genus making their way on land with difficulty, a man whose gait is wavering and unsteady, is said, according to a northern proverb, to be "as drunk as an auk."

---

*Genus* LOMVIA.

## COMMON GUILLEMOT (*Lomvia troile*).

1. Derived from the French *guillemot* (in Picardy, *Guillame*); whence

Guillem (Wales).
Willock (Norfolk; Orkney Isles, etc.). See under Kittiwake.
Willy (Norfolk).
Foolish guillemot.

From the indifference it shows, in the breeding season, to the approach of man. Cf. the French proverb "Bête comme un guillemot," and the Suffolk saying "Mad (*i.e.* silly) as a willock."

2. Various names.

Spratter (Hants).

From its fondness for small fry.

Eligny (South Pembroke).

Quet (Aberdeen).
Auk (Orkney Islands).
Scout (Yorkshire; Forfar; Orkney Isles).
Skuttock, or Skiddaw (East Lothian).
Kiddaw (Cornwall).

The three last derived from *skite*, to mute.

Maggie (Forfar).

From the black and white plumage, resembling that of a magpie.

Tarrock
Lungie, or Longie (Shetland Isles).
Muir-eun: pronounced Murr-yan (Horn Head, Donegal).
Murre, or Murse (Cornwall; Devon; Cork Harbour).
Marrot, or Morrot (Firth of Forth).

Icel. *mâr*; from the bird's cry.

Tinkershire, or Tinkershue.

From its black head and back.

Lavy, or Lamy (Hebrides).

Sea hen (Northumberland; Durham; East Lothian).

The Gaelic name is *Eun a chrubian* (*i.e.* the squatting or crouching bird).

Strany.

---

*Genus* URIA.

## LACK GUILLEMOT (*Uria Grylle*).

1. From the great attachment shown to each other by the male and female, thus resembling the dove, this bird has received the names

Greenland dove (Orkney Isles).
Sea turtle, or Greenland turtle.
Sea pigeon (Larne Bay and Lambay Island; Ireland).
Sea dovie (Forfar).
Diving pigeon (Farn Isles).
Rock dove (Ireland).
Doveky.

2. Also called

Puffixet (Farn Islands).
Parrot (Roundstone, Co. Galway).
Scraber (East Lothian; Hebrides).

See under Manx shearwater, 2.

Tystie (Orkney and Shetland Islands).

Cf. Norw. *teiste*.

Spotted guillemot.

From its spotted winter plumage.

The Welsh call it *Cas gan longwr* (*i.e.* the sailors' hatred), from a notion that its appearance forebodes a storm.

---

*Genus* MERGULUS.

**LITTLE AUK** (*Mergulus alle*). Icel. *álka*.

Also called
Rotchie or Rotch.
Ratch (Shetland Isles).

In Greenland it has the name of Ice bird, being considered the harbinger of ice; in Norway, that of *Alke-konge*, or Auk king.

---

*Genus* FRATERCULA.

**PUFFIN** (*Fratercula arctica*).

1. So called either from its puffed out appearance, or from its swelling beak; which latter has given it the names of

Sea parrot (Norfolk).

Cf. *Perroquet de mer* (France).

Bottlenose.
Coulterneb (Farn Islands).
Bill (Galway).
Guldenhead.

2. Familiar names.

Tommy.
Tom noddy, or Tommie norie (Farn Islands; Scotland).

"Norw. *noere* signifies *puellus*, *homuncio* (G. Andr., pp. 186, 189), the boy, or manikin. Hence perhaps the reason of his being otherwise called by the diminutive of a man's name." (Jamieson.)

"There is an old Scotch saying:—

'Tammie Norie o' the Bass
Canna kiss a bonny lass,'—

said jocularly when a young man refuses to salute a rustic coquette. The puffin, which builds in great numbers on the Bass rock, is a very shy bird, with a long deep bill, giving him an air of stupidity; and from these two things to-

gether the saying probably has arisen. It is also customary to call a stupid-looking man a Tammie Norie." (Chambers' "Popular Rhymes," p. 190).

3. Called from its favourite haunts, it has the names of

Bass cock (Scotland).
Ailsa cock, or parrot (Scotland; Antrim).

4. Various names.

Pipe, or Pope (Cornwall).
Scout (Farn Isles).
Willock (Kent).

See under Common Guillemot.

Bouger or Bulker (Hebrides).
Mullet (Scarborough).
Helegug (Wales).
Marrot.

For the last two see under Razorbill, 2.

Cockandy (Fife).
Coliaheen, *i.e.* old woman; from its old-fashioned appearance (Galway).

5. Nashe, in his "Lenten Stuffe," speaks of "the Puffin that is halfe fish, halfe flesh (a John indifferent, and an Ambodexter betwixt either)."

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